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No. 369.

SPRING SONG.

BY EDEN E. REXFORD.

I came across the south-land hills;
I crossed the sun-kissed plains,
And bring the birds and blossoms back,
And pleasant April rains.
The children laugh to hear my step,
And violets, through the mold,
Peep out; and when they see my face
Their little leaves unfold.
I set the streamlets free again,
And dancing on their way
The merry music of their song
Makes glad the world to-day.
I coax the leaves to venture forth
Upon the apple-trees,
And open all the crocus-cups
To tempt the honey-bees.
I find the little flowers that sleep
Beneath the leaves of fall,
And hear the robin's call,
And every little blossom stirs
Beneath the sweet, warm rain;
Oh! all the world is glad to-day
That April's come again!

The Girl Rivals;

OR,

THE WAR OF HEARTS.

BY CORINNE CUSHMAN,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK EYES AND BLUE," "BRAVE
BARBARA," "HUNTED BRIDE," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

SPREADING SNARES FOR GLITTERING WINGS.

ONE of the three friends who had been with Otis Garner at the club, the night of the famous wager, was something worse than a young fellow "sowing his wild oats," which was the worst that could be said of the remainder of the quartette.

The only one of the four who had not been spoiled by the indulgence of rich relatives, "Brummell" Pomeroy had never possessed any good qualities to be perverted. Nature had spoiled him in the making, having been nearly out of moral qualities when she compounded his heart and brain. He was an adventurer by profession; it was his business to make friendships with very young, very rich men, and to get his living out of them. Not over twenty-six or eight himself, at the time of the adventure from the steps of the Tremont, he knew how to command the confidence and admiration of fellows like Otis Garner. In the first place, he dressed always to such absolute perfection and with such consummate taste, that he was their envy and their wonder. This talent had gained him the sobriquet of Brummell, the initial of his given name being B.—probably for Benjamin; he never wrote it in full. Then, he understood all there was to understand about vines, about cards, about horses; if his intimates were to believe him—and they generally did—he was also very wise about women, and an immense favorite with them. All these accomplishments being of a kind to demand the admiration of his companions, they did admire him, and thought it a fine thing to be considered confidential friends of Mr. Pomeroy.

Without having any personal beauty, except a tall figure, Brummell had the reputation of great elegance, and was called a handsome man. His eyes were small, of no particular color, and close together. His nose was long, his forehead low, his mouth wide; but, he had a well cared for mustache, waxed after a foreign fashion, which partially concealed his disagreeable lips. His hands and feet, though long, were slender, and looked well in immaculate gloves and boots.

He had been the most amused of any at the spirited way in which young Garner had fulfilled his word of honor as to the wager. Also, he had most closely observed the innocence and beauty of the poor girl who had been his victim. Those small, light eyes of his had feasted themselves on every particular of the childish, sweet loveliness of the little bride who had stood at the altar with his friend. During the following week he had contrived—how, Garner himself could not have told, for it was his intention to keep it a sacred secret from all—to get the address of the bride's mother.

Consequently, it followed that—when the crash came about the unfortunate young man's ears, and he was disinherited, and finally left the city—this intimate friend of his, alone of all his acquaintances, knew where the little bride lived *perdu*. Not a word of his knowledge did he breathe to any other.

But, not long after Otis Garner left for New York, it came to be an almost daily occurrence for Brummell Pomeroy to walk once or twice of an afternoon up and down the humble but respectable court in which the Widow Lovelace and her daughter dwelt.

He often met his friend's deserted bride going out or coming in; for very shortly after Otis Garner left Boston, little Mildred resumed her work of giving music-lessons to the two or three little girls whose mothers employed the incompetent young thing because she was cheap. Mildred could not help noticing one whose surpassing elegance made him doubly conspicuous in such a place; but, she did not associate him with Otis; nor did she ever dream that these promenades had any connection with her humble self. She puzzled herself for a



A girl, very nearly as young as herself, but tall and dark, and oh! so splendidly beautiful!

few days, after encountering him so frequently, as to what could bring such a gentleman into that vicinity; concluding, finally, that it was no affair of hers, and she would not vex her thoughts about him—though she *did* wish his business, whatever it was, had called him in some other direction, for she did not like having to pass and repass him so often.

He always scanned her so closely; it was embarrassing. Soon, whenever he caught her eye, he bowed, or lifted his hat; but so seriously, so respectfully, she could take no offense. She gave him the coldest possible little nod in return; and that was as far as their acquaintance progressed for some time.

As we know, young Garner left his wife quite a little sum of money, beside the sum which he had lavished on her. Fifteen hundred dollars, in her eyes, was a small fortune. She meant—now that he was poor—to spend it very, very prudently; but, when week after week went by, and she had no word from him, except the first two or three brief, coldly-courteous notes he had sent her in the last fortnight, she began to realize that he did, indeed, mean to leave her utterly. Bearing his name—bound to him—her title of wife was to prove an idle mockery. In his last brief letter had been another suggestion that three years of willful absence on his part would give her the right to regain her liberty, coupled with formal regrets that his wild freak in marrying her must keep her so long from the love and admiration of such other suitors as one so lovely and amiable was sure to have.

Not a breath of affection from his lips; not a hint that their relations could ever be more intimate; not an idea, that in marrying her he had already secured her love—her fondest, deepest love, not for a day or a year, but for a lifetime!

When Mildred had read it, the soft blush on her cheek when she opened it had faded to a cold white.

"He is bound to get rid of me. He bitterly repents the 'wild freak' which made me his. Oh, I repent it, too! Oh, I repent the foolish consent so quickly won! Not on my own account—no, for I would suffer a life of solitude just to live on the memory of those sweet half-hours when he came to see me!—but on *his*! He wishes to be free. Ah me! poor little Mildred! He is ashamed of you—he cannot love you! Perhaps he loves another! Yes, I am sure of it. What was that the paper said about his uncle's plans for his marriage with a beautiful cousin? Perhaps he loves this beautiful cousin! If it were not for me, he would not be driven from his home and from her presence. She lived in the same house with him—their uncle had it all nicely arranged—so the papers said. I am the miserable little upstart who has spoiled all. I 'jumped at the chance' to marry this rich young gentleman. 'It is a proper punishment on me that he is disinherited and has treated me with contempt since the hour he kept his word to his friends!' Oh, yes, yes, yes! I acknowledge all. I wish I could die and get out of the way—miserable little marplot that I am!

"But, I love him—I love him—I love him!" "That proud lady-cousin will never worship his very shadow—the echo of his footsteps—as I worship them!"

Yet Mildred, childish and unworldly as she

was, had pride. She resolved that she would never touch one dollar of the sum which her husband had deposited for her use.

"I will work for poor sick mamma, as I used to work; his money shall stay where it is, and when he comes back, he shall have it—every penny of it. They shall see that I am not the mercenary creature they say I am. I did think it would be pleasant to be able to give mamma all she needs; but I loved him, or I would not have said 'yes.' He seemed to me so beautiful, so superior! I thought Heaven had answered my prayer to send me a friend to take care of poor little me, when mamma was dead and gone."

So she resumed her lessons to the three or four small pupils, living even more sparingly than before, except that she disposed of some of the costly trifles Otis had given her, and bought luxuries for her mother, whose health, now that winter had set in, grew worse from week to week.

And, to feed her starving heart with the thought that she was Otis Garner's bride, she would dress herself—late in the afternoon, when she had no more errands out of doors—in some one of the silken robes he had bought her, clasp his pearls about her slender neck, fasten up her shining hair with the diamond-spray, and sit and dream wild dreams about her fairy prince—wild, sweet, impossible dreams.

At the same time a passionate desire took possession of her to see her rival—this beautiful cousin, the flower of the proud old Garner family. She found out the splendid mansion of the Garners; and fell into a habit, when her last lesson of the day was through with, of going home by way of that street, no matter how far out of the way it took her.

The third time she passed the house the Garner carriage, with its black coachman, in dark blue livery, and black horses sumptuous with gold-decorated harness, stood before it.

She recognized the coat-of-arms on the panel of the door, for she had seen it on the quaint old seal which Otis had once shown her. She walked quickly on a few rods further—then turned and came slowly back.

A lady was coming down the broad, lion-guarded steps of the house. Mildred, walking very slowly by, had a good opportunity for one long look. A girl, very nearly as young as herself, but tall and dark, and oh! so splendidly beautiful!

Mildred's great, childish, violet eyes fell, eager as they were, when the bright glance of the superb young beauty chanced to encounter their earnest observation. How like a princess, "to the manner born," the heiress glided down the steps, floated across the pavement, and entered the luxurious carriage whose door was held open for her by another liveried servant!

How her velvets, and laces, and flowers became her, as the rich feathers of the tropical bird become it! What a dainty little hand, with a pearl-colored glove which fitted like the skin, lay, carelessly clasping a costly handkerchief, on the amber satin of the carriage-cushions, as she gave some directions—in a voice musical as the breathings of the "lovely lute"—to the coachman.

But was there—or was there not—just a shadow over that brilliant face! as if the girl possibly thought of some loss or grief? Mildred asked herself.

"Is she sorry, or is she glad, that, by his folly, she has got his fortune?"

"Does she love him, and grieve? Or, has she only gained?"

The restless horses dashed gayly off with their lovely burden.

Mildred could not answer her own questions; but she went home, a thousand times more melancholy than before she had seen this peerless creature.

"No study, no toil, no endeavor, will ever make me like her. She is born to grace, and pride, and high-bred ease; while I am constrained, and humble, and poor. No wonder that he despises me! Oh, my proud, fairy prince! Your poor little Mildred is but the lowly violet for you to set your foot upon. She is your fitting mate. I see it—I feel it."

Then, out of her very despair, there arose, in Mildred's soul, a mighty resolve to make herself a lady and meet companion for him whose name she bore.

"I will take her for my example," thought the poor child. "I will steal a look at her as often as I dare. I will notice her dress, her movements, her way of doing this and that. I will try to be as like her as possible. Yet I shall be ridiculous when she is incomparable. Nevertheless, I will try. I love him—and I will try."

She spoke the last words aloud, as she hurried homeward, and she set her tiny foot on the pavement with a resolute tap. She had been so engrossed with her own thoughts that she had noticed nothing.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Garner," said a polite voice.

She stopped, startled and blushing to be called by that name.

It was the gentleman she had passed so many times.

He stood, most respectfully soliciting her attention; though the day was cold he held his hat in his hand.

"Will you excuse my speaking to you without an introduction, and on the street?" he began, most beseechingly and courteously. "The fact is, Mrs. Garner, I am deeply anxious to hear from Mr. Garner. We are intimate—very intimate—friends, if you will believe me; brothers, almost; yet he has given us all the slip. We, who are so fond of him, and so anxious to prove our friendship, have not even his present address. Will you be so good as to favor me with it?" and returning his hat to his head, he took out note-book and pencil.

"Indeed, sir, I am sorry, but I do not know it myself."

"Ah, I see, Mrs. Garner; you are very properly cautious. Of course, you know your husband's address, but you will not give it to a stranger. Here is my card—B. Pomeroy. You must have heard him speak of me. 'Brummell,' he calls me—a joke of his."

"I do not remember his speaking of you. But then," added Mildred, looking up with an artless blush, and sad smile, "that is not strange. Our acquaintance was so short."

"Yes, yes, I know. Why, my dear, dear lady, I was one of the four who laid down the wager; I saw you two meet; I saw you two married. A wild frolic, perhaps, but it ended charmingly. We all considered our friend Garner a lucky fellow! It was a frightful lottery, yet he drew a splendid prize. We all envied him when we saw the bride."

"I scarcely think he was to be envied, Mr. Pomeroy," said little Mildred, with a blending of humility and dignity very sweet and touching to see, and she attempted to pass him.

"One moment, please. Yes, I know, I know—lost the old uncle's money—for a time, only, I dare say—but gained a prize richly worth the whole of it."

"My husband does not seem to think so, sir," responded Mildred. "My mother will be looking for me, Mr. Pomeroy. I would like to oblige you, but I have not heard from Mr. Garner for some time. He is in New York. I cannot tell you the street or number of his residence."

"Ten thousand thanks! If I hear from him soon, I shall take the liberty of letting you know," and with another profound bow, he passed on.

The little twelve-year-old maid whom Mrs. Lovelace kept to do their roughest work and to wait upon her in her daughter's absence, met Mildred at the door with word that her mother was worse. This alarming news banished the thick-throated fancies about the beautiful cousin and the strange gentleman from Mildred's mind for that evening.

But the mother got better, and the old dreams filled again the mind of the deserted child-wife.

And one week from the day on which he had addressed her, at meeting her on the street, Mr. Brummell Pomeroy called and sent in his card, by the little maid, to Mrs. Lovelace and Mrs. Garner.

"He has news of him," cried Mildred, and she met the man of duplicity at the door of their modest parlor, a glow on her cheek and fire in her eye and smile on her lip that made the artless little wife as beautiful as some hour.

The false-hearted man of the world knew that bright look was not called up by pleasure at seeing him; but he resolved, then and there, that the time should come when he would have that power.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HANDWRITING AFTER DEATH.

IT was Christmas night—the first Christmas after the mad marriage which had sent Otis Garner to wander over the earth a ruined and aimless man—and the great house of the Garners was ablaze with light from basement to attic. Yet there was no merry-making going on in the old mansion. There was not even one guest to break the silence which reigned through the illuminated splendor of the drawing-room. The servants had lighted up the rooms, according to custom; but not for the reception of troops of joyous friends and relatives.

Old Mr. Garner was no exception to a common rule—that as a man grows older and colder and richer his friends fall away. Not but that he had an army of admirers who would fain be intimate with him; but he kept these at their distance—admirers, sharers at times of a sumptuous hospitality, but not heart-friends. And since the bright, gay, handsome, faulty boy, on whom he had lavished nearly all that was left of his withering affections, had so cruelly disappointed him—and since he had driven this boy from his heart and home—the old man had felt little disposed for empty shows of gayety. Crowds of idle pleasure-seekers were no longer invited to dance and chatter and feast under his princely roof.

Did he forget his young niece, and that life was not all over with her—that she might crave the stimulus of gay society? No. But Honoria was not a boy—she did not bear the Garner name—she never could be to him what Otis had been.

Nevertheless, he remembered her—that she was his niece and his heiress; and that society had claims on her. More than once he had offered to give her a grand ball or more modest German. But Honoria herself had refused. What was the matter with her, that the young beauty shrank, almost as much as the old uncle, from the fashionable dissipations of the season?

There were dozens of young scions of the bluest blood of Boston who were pining for an opportunity to declare in what high esteem they held her; i.e., her beauty, rank and fortune.

Yet she remained indifferent to the triumphs in store for her the moment she might deign to accept them.

That perverse quality of human nature which makes an object dear in proportion as it is unattainable, had suddenly, in the hour in which she heard him declare himself married, given to her cousin Otis a charm and power he had never before had for her. Not that pure-minded Honoria was so wicked as to knowingly cherish a love for one lost to her by marriage with another; on the contrary, she made every effort to put him out of her thoughts.

Did you ever attempt, on a sultry summer day, to brush away a fly that annoys you? Then, you know, that the more attention you give the buzzing insect, the more persistently will he return to the attack. So it was with Honoria's thoughts of her cousin. When she knew him her slave and lover, she gave small heed to thoughts of him that might hum drowsily about her; but now that such thoughts must be brushed away, behold! they return and return to trouble and annoy.

In the shock and surprise of his avowed

marriage, she, for the first time, felt that she loved him with whom she had so carelessly trifled. Now that she had lost him she realized how dear he had grown, through months and years of companionship. Otis had his faults—never mind; she could have reformed them. Otis was not wise, or prudent, or very intellectual, or very good; she had imagined finer ideals of a man—never mind! she loved him—loved his very faults and follies!

Oh, that she had known her own heart sooner!

In the three long months since, casting that wild look of farewell into her troubled eyes, he had gone away, she had found enough to do to study how to forget him as a lover and learn to serve him as a friend.

She knew to a certainty almost nothing about Otis since his departure. She had heard a rumor that he was in New York; she had heard from some source—she could not trace it—that he had never been near the poor girl whom he married since the hour they stood at the altar together—that was all. Whether this rumor was true—that was the girl's name—who she was, where she lived, how she looked, acted, what she knew—this was all a blank to Honoria. She had formed in her mind an idea of what this girl was like. Bold and unblushing she must be, or she never would have taken up with such an offer; coarse, ignorant, impudent, ungrateful; with the rude beauty of the factory girl—for some one, somewhere, had averred that the bride was handsome. This was the image of her cousin's wife which presented itself to Honoria whenever she thought of her. It was seldom that any pity for the girl softened the severity of the proud heiress' condemnation. Her pity, her tenderness, were all for the wayward, frolicsome cousin whose high spirits, and the temptations of bad company, had led him into this fatal folly.

It was Christmas night, as we said; the stately dinner in the great dining-room was over, and the two, who had partaken very lightly of its long succession of luxurious dishes, were now in the brilliant drawing-room.

Mr. Garner sat by a small table drawn up in front of the silver-barred grate, where a golden fire nestled cozily.

His "lean and slumped" feet were stretched toward its comfortable warmth; his eyes were on the heart of the golden fire, though a book, half-dropped from his hand, gave pretext of occupation.

On Christmas night what can an old man do but think of by-gone Christmas nights?

Honoria, curled up in a corner of a sofa, watched him from a distance. Perhaps she cried a little, for something round and bright sparkled in the sudden upleaping of a rosy jet of flame in the grate, as she lifted her face and looked longingly at the old man dreaming his dreams.

A moment more and she was at his feet. "Uncle, dear, dear uncle!" "Well, my child?" "We are so lonely!" "Oh! we are?"

"Yes, uncle, you are lonely too! I can see it in your face! Forgive poor Otis, uncle! Oh, forgive him, and send for him to come home!" "With his bride out of the streets?"

"Oh, not out of the streets, dear uncle—she was a music-teacher; she may be good and lovable—we do not know, and I do not think it to herself and, at all events, they say he is not living with her—never has lived with her."

The eager, beautiful eyes were upturned to the old man's; her soft little hands were clasped over his knee; he looked quietly down into the dark, blushing face, and said, slowly:

"Would you have me re-make my will yet a third time, Honoria? If Otis is forgiven, and comes back to this as his home, he must have the property left to him as at first designed. Reflect! You will no longer have the interest in that property which, as my nephew's wife, you would have had. All that is over and gone now. Are you willing to give up your own prospects to Otis—and to Otis' wife?"

"There is enough for all of us, dear uncle." "I have not built up this fortune as patiently as I have, to break it in pieces over my grave. It is my pride, my ambition, to keep it together in one great whole, as it now is. Therefore I shall not leave it to two, three, or four."

"Leave it all to my cousin, then. I prefer he shall have it."

"Not so, Honoria. The man who will do an act so utterly unwise and rash as he did, is unfit to have the control of such a fortune. Rather, let me trust it to the small hands of my girl-niece—with such promises as will prevent her from at once giving it all away."

"Let us not talk of the money, uncle dear; you have many years of vigorous life yet before you, in which to take charge of your own. But, forgive poor Otis, his folly. Send for him. I know you will be happier, uncle. Think! perhaps your harshness is driving him to yet wilder courses! Despair may make him desperate. Oh, I fret about him night and day."

"The Bible says, Honoria, 'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,' it is good advice; take it. Remember you are but seventeen, and do not seek to give advice to your elders. Here, child, I did not intend to make you cry. But my mind is made up about Otis, and I shall not change it without better reason than I have yet seen for doing so. Come, come! dry your eyes and go to the piano and sing me some of the old ballads that you know I like!"

Her uncle seemed a hard and a grim old man to Honoria just then—though his Christmas gift of pearls and diamonds had cost many thousand dollars, and lay glittering in her hair, her tiny ears, and about her stately neck, as a testimony to his generosity—but she wiped her eyes as he bade her, and went to the piano.

This instrument stood in the music-room at the end of the long drawing-room, and separated from it by heavy silk curtains, which slipped back on gilded rings at pleasure. Honoria drew them wide apart so that her uncle might listen to the music at his ease. As she did so she started and gave a little scream.

"What is it?" asked the old man by the fire, half rising.

"Nothing—nothing at all, dear uncle! I must be growing nervous since even shadows frighten me," and with a little laugh she sat down to the piano.

Her voice trembled on the first verse of her first song; but she soon mastered it, and it swelled out sweet, plaintive, and soul-thrilling, giving a depth of feeling to the simple words of the old ballads, and chaining the heart of the listener. For during those few weeks—those bright, unreal, wonderful, blissful weeks—when he came every day "to make the acquaintance," as he said, "of this sweet stranger, whom he called his wife."

To-night she had even gone so far as to array herself in the white satin and lace dress in which she had been married. There, in the

mesalliance—he would have no more to do with him.

Not a breath whispered to the old man the truth, that this same reckless "boy" was, at that moment, lurking behind the curtains of the music-room, having sought the house with a faint hope that by this time his folly was pardoned; but who, hearing the sharp words replied to his cousin's unselfish petition, had shrunk back into the shadows of the music-room, resolved not to betray himself to the stern judge.

Honoria had seen him, and, at the same moment, the signal of silence which he made; and so, trembling and anxious, had continued on her way to the piano, pretending carelessness.

Perhaps for a long hour Honoria sung and played; then, with a weary sigh her uncle arose, thanked her, rung the bell for his personal attendant, and still sighing, climbed the broad, velvet-covered stairs to his own room.

"Now?" cried Honoria, as master and man went into the room above, rising from the stool and going toward the intruder, who also arose and met her half-way.

"I came from New York to-day, cousin. I am tired and homesick. I felt that I must see you again. I am penniless, too. It is hard to earn money when you have not been trained to it. I hoped uncle had repented his harshness, and would, at least, give me something to do in the counting-room, but I heard what he said to you to-night. He is merciless. Well, be it so. But you, Honoria, you are all tenderness and generosity! I shall never forget your plea in my behalf to-night. God bless you for it!"

"How did you get into the house, Otis?" she asked, more because she desired to hide her agitation than because she had any curiosity to know.

"I went away so suddenly I forgot to leave my night-key," he answered, with an attempt at a laugh. "Do not be afraid of me, however—I shall never come to rob the house. Oh, Honoria, what a lifetime it seems since I saw you last!"

The fiery eyes were burning down into her soul.

"Yes," she answered him, drawing away from him, as he would have put his arms about her. "It has been a long time. We—I have been lonely without you. The place does not seem natural."

"I have been dying to see you," he whispered.

"Where is your wife, Otis?"

"Some subtle instinct to defend herself against any love-making on his part prompted her to ask the question.

"My wife! My God, what a mockery you make of that word, cousin! Is that girl my wife! Must that mummy bind us forever?"

"Do you must that mummy the solemn words spoken at the altar?"

"In my case they were. She never has been—never will be my wife. In the course of time she will go through the formality of getting a divorce from me. You love me, Honoria, even as I love you. Will you not promise me to wait until that time comes? I came here; more to get your promise to that, than for any other reason. Give me that promise, and I will go away and make one more earnest effort to help and raise myself. You will do that much for me, will you not, my sweet—my only love—my true wife that is to be, some day?"

She pulled away the hands he held so tight they were almost crushed in his clasp, looking him sorrowfully but bravely in the face as she answered him:

"No, Otis, I will make no promise to you while that woman lives. I am your friend—your true, warm, earnest friend. But she is your wife. Her rights are sacred—as sacred as are my ideas of what is due to me, Otis. You must never speak to me in this manner again."

"You will not understand me," he cried, impatiently. "I do not want you to say anything wrong—only to promise for the future."

"We must not deceive ourselves, Otis. You are blind, or trying to make yourself out so. Once more, I am your friend. Try to make me more than that, and I will be nothing but a stranger to you."

She bade him sit down by her side and tell her his business troubles. She sympathized with these, and promised to try again to soften their uncle's displeasure; she was kind, angelic in her gentle tenderness—but she would allow no more of those burning, foolish, almost wicked words with which he had begun.

At last the bells tolled midnight; promising him to meet him on the Common the following afternoon, she let him softly out of the door into the street.

She did not keep this appointment. When another morning dawned there had been a stranger visitor at the old Garner mansion than he who had entered there so quietly and stolen to the music-room to meet her whom he loved. This visitor had no latch-key; but he entered, nevertheless; and when he went away he did not go alone; the soul of the millionaire went with him, leaving houses and lands and stocks and gold behind forever.

When the servant entered Mr. Garner's room, on the following morning, he found his master dead in bed. Whether the disappointment consequent on the conduct of his nephew had aught to do with hurrying this sad event, cannot be certainly known.

Surely, the old man made the effects of his wrath permanent. Every dollar of all his property was bequeathed to his niece, Honoria Appleton, with this proviso: that she was never to share it with her cousin, Otis Garner. The gift of any portion of the estate, or of any sum of money, or any jewels or personal property, to this Otis, would render the whole will void; and in that case the estate should go to a distant relative—a strange Garner, living in another part of the country.

So did the implacable old man perpetuate his anger.

The name, signed firmly to that unjust will, made it impossible for Honoria to follow the impulse of her heart, and made her wretched.

CHAPTER IX. POISONED FLOWERS.

LITTLE Mildred sat alone in her humble sitting-room on New Year's night; her mother, growing more and more feeble, now seldom left her bedroom, unless for two or three hours at mid-day.

Mildred sat alone, and she and her splendid dress made a strange contrast to her surroundings. On this night, in her sorrow and her forlornness, she had indulged in her fancy to wear the rich raiment her husband had given her during those few weeks—those bright, unreal, wonderful, blissful weeks—when he came every day "to make the acquaintance," as he said, "of this sweet stranger, whom he called his wife."

To-night she had even gone so far as to array herself in the white satin and lace dress in which she had been married. There, in the

poor little room, she sat, pale, sad, lovely, like Cinderella awaiting her godmother's coach-and-four.

The glistering bridal robe fell richly about her dainty figure; there were pearls about her graceful neck, bracelets about her white arms; but, instead of the bridal veil, she had taken down her long, bright hair and shaken it out in a thousand rippling strands, until she looked like some nymph of the sea, dressed in the silvery pearl of its caves, and sitting in the midst of a golden fountain.

Surely, surely, had the proud old man, now lying under the snow of the churchyard, once beheld this delicate young creature, in her innocence and her loveliness, he would not have so relentlessly punished his nephew for his rash act.

But he never had seen her, and now—it was too late. She sat there, alone, with pale cheeks, but bright, wide, expectant eyes, holding in her small hands a most exquisite large bouquet of cut flowers, whose perfume filled the room.

These flowers had come to her that morning, by a messenger had left them with the little maid-of-all-work; there was no card attached, nor was any name left; so poor little Mildred, her heart leaping high in her breast, took it for granted that Mr. Garner had returned to Boston and had sent these lovely blossoms as a token that he would call upon her some time that day.

All day she had waited. Restless as some brilliant humming-bird she had flitted about her mother, or darted to the window, until the dark came and she was pale and tired-looking and waiting. At twilight the thought had come to her to robe herself in her wedding-dress; and now she sat, pale, impatient, clasping the flowers which she dreamed came from him.

Ah, she was not mistaken! He was coming! A step paused in front of the house, came up to the door, the bell rung, the little maid answered the summons—in another moment she would see him, hear his voice.

Starting to her feet, clasping the roses to her panting bosom, while her large eyes flashed and a vivid blush stole over her pale cheeks, she stood there, in her glistering, glimmering, snow-white wedding-dress, like some spirit of a better world hesitating whether to pause or take flight—all her soul on her trembling lips and in her brightening eyes—when the door opened, and she saw, instead of her husband—

Brummell Pomeroy.

The shock of the disappointment was too great for her to conceal it. She turned paler than her dress and sunk down again into her chair without speaking a word.

Pomeroy himself, man-of-the-world as he was, stood still a full minute, dazzled by the unexpected vision of beauty and joy, for Mildred's look had been one of rapturous expectation as he came in. He had never before seen her in the fullness of her beauty, and which her husband had given her; he had expected to meet a very, very pretty, innocent, shy, embarrassed girl—but not this radiant creature!

For half a moment, too, he made the mistake of thinking the smile, the blush, the radiance were for him! Then he saw the bitter disappointment, the pale reaction—and comprehended the situation. Biting his lips, he repressed his annoyance as best he might, and waited.

"Mr. Pomeroy," said the sweet, tremulous voice at last, "pardon my mistake. I was looking for—for—some one else."

"Ah, yes, Mr. Garner, and some one else will not be here to-night. Let me prophesy that."

"I am sure he will. He is in town—see! He sent these flowers this morning."

"My dear Mrs. Garner," said the gentleman—who had been so kind to the deserted wife, always bringing her news of Otis whenever he could gain any—coming forward and taking a chair quite close to hers—"I shall hate myself for having to deceive you. No, I will not do it. Perhaps Otis sent the flowers—he has been in Boston several days."

"Mr. Pomeroy, did you send these?" asked Mildred, and even as she asked the question her little face fell into her lap the roses and the violet which she had kissed a hundred times that day.

"Mrs. Garner, you must forgive me," he answered, with an air of humility which his club friends would have been amused at. "I did send the flowers, not meaning to take a liberty, or dreaming that they might mislead you. It was New Year's Day, and I only wished to give you evidence that you had one friend at least who remembered you, with all the most earnest good wishes of the day."

"It was very—kind of you," stammered Mildred, cold and pale.

"I supposed Otis had been here, with gifts far more costly than my poor flowers. Of course he has been here?"

"No—no! Are you sure he has been in town?"

"Positive. I saw him twice; though he did not know that he was recognized. But he has gone now. He left on the 4 P.M. train this afternoon."

"Gone!"

The low cry, vibrating with anguish, thrilled through the room, but it awakened no mercy in the selfish man who sat before her, taking pleasure in her despair.

Pleasure—for he hoped, by arousing her pride and indignation—by showing her how little her husband cared for her—to win her gratitude to himself for his sympathy, his interest, his resentment at her wrongs. As, by slow degrees, he pushed his friend Otis from her heart, he hoped to slip in and fill the vacant place. Yes, even if the affair never went beyond a harmless, but deeply interesting flirtation, it was the kind of business which absorbed a large part of the time and talents of Brummell Pomeroy.

He made his living—a luxurious living, too—but of his friends, and he found his amusement in winning away the hearts of his friends' wives. It was a noble and an honorable object to which to devote himself! And he went through with the business with the same thoroughness that distinguished his attention to dress.

Not for a long time—perhaps never—had he found a woman with so many attractions for him as his little Mildred.

She was so innocent, so unworried, and so beautiful; and she was placed in such romantic circumstances; and she was so defenseless! Here was the land upon which this wolf of society might prey, if it so pleased him.

Nothing pleased him better.

"Yes, my dear lady, he went away to-day. He has been in town *sub rosa*, I suspect. It was only by chance I discovered him."

"But he might have come here. I would not have made any trouble."

"Just so. But then—if he had other objects in view! For instance, the second time I met him he was walking, by starlight and gas-light, on the Common, with a lady by his side—his cousin, the beautiful Miss Appleton. They appeared very deeply interested in each other, indeed."

"Why do you tell me this, Mr. Pomeroy? Do you love to be cruel?"

He was moving too fast; the little wife was sharper than he thought; he put on an air of injured innocence.

"Love to be cruel? You are severe, Mrs. Garner. No, I pity you—I take a friendly, a deep interest in your welfare. It is Otis who is cruel. It makes me angry with him—and then, I am too outspoken. Perhaps I am mistaken! Perhaps he does not love this superb cousin about whom he has raved to me for hours in days gone by. He may quite have outgrown that juvenile preference. These two, walking together on the Common at ten o'clock at night, had plenty of prosaic business to engage them, I have no doubt."

"I dare say you know, Mrs. Garner, that the uncle is dead?"

"Whose uncle dead?" murmured Mildred—her thoughts were on those two walking together under the stars, and came back slowly to the meaning of what her companion said.

"Otis Garner's uncle. He died, alone, in his bed, very suddenly, the night before Christmas. His will settles matters pretty clearly."

"Oh, what was it?" she asked, now all eagerness, since Otis' prospects were concerned. "Did he forgive my poor Otis? Did he have mercy, after all?"

"He left everything to his niece, and a provision that she was never to share a dollar of it with her cousin Otis, on pain of losing all. She is prohibited from doing the least thing for him. The old gentleman well knew that his niece's first impulse would be to divide her fortune with the man she loves so dearly, but whom a single inopportune step on his part had prevented her marrying."

Mildred's fair little head drooped lower and lower; the golden veil of hair almost hid her pale face; she twisted her hands together, unconsciously of how their convulsive movements betrayed the struggle going on in her heaving breast. Finally she looked up at her visitor with a deep sigh.

"She may not always be prevented from marrying him, Mr. Pomeroy. I feel that I shall not live long—my heart is breaking. I think—yet, should I be so unfortunate as to live on against my will, perhaps there may be opened a way for Otis Garner to have his desire after all. I suppose, in the course of two or three years, as he suggests, I can obtain the aid of the courts to untie this knot which is so painful to him. I must not—I will not—hold any man an unwilling prisoner, bound to me by a galling chain!"

"You are right, Mrs. Garner. I honor your womanly pride as highly as I respect you. Believe me, you have my warmest, sincerest sympathy! Yes! free yourself from one who does not appreciate the good fortune which a foolish frolic bestowed upon him—who does not care for the loveliest, the purest, the sweetest woman heaven ever made! It makes my blood run in my veins to see the indifference—but no, Otis is my friend, and I ought not to say what I think of him."

"You forget. Otis loved another before he ever saw me. Can you blame him for that, Mr. Pomeroy?"

She lifted her lovely face in a piteous appeal; tears were streaming down her cheeks; she would defend the man she loved, even while her heart was breaking.

Brummell ventured to lift one of the little hands, and to press it in token of silent sympathy.

"You are too good, too generous, for a mere selfish man to understand you, little Mildred. All I can say is—there are plenty of men who would willingly give all they are worth to be in Garner's place. The mere sacrifice of a fortune would seem a light price to pay for the bliss of having such a woman as you are love them. I am a bachelor, little Mildred—but that is only because I never met my ideal before—and now, it is too late! But I am wild to talk thus to you, who are but a child, too modest, too innocent, to have the least idea of your own power. Hold yourself proudly, my little lady; do not be cast down by your husband's neglect. There are men who would risk their lives for a smile of yours. Make your husband realize your power. But there! I have said too much. Pardon me. It is as his friend, as well as yours, that I would teach you to value yourself. And now, again, pardon me! Do not think me wanting in delicacy, but as an old, tried friend of Otis, and as one knowing how he has suddenly been cut off from past opulence, and has to struggle now to earn his bread—may I ask you if you have everything you need? My purse, my time, my influence, are all at your disposal. I shall feel honored to have you make some demand upon them."

"You are very good," replied the girl-wife, "very kind, Mr. Pomeroy. I began to support myself before I met Mr. Garner, and I can do it still. But he gave me all the money he had before he went away—remember that, Mr. Pomeroy! gave me all—robbed himself! Oh, it is no fault of his that he cannot love me!" with another burst of tears. "I have left his money in the bank where he placed it for my benefit. I will starve rather than touch it! Still, there is no danger of my starving. No! thank you again for your thoughtfulness, Mr. Pomeroy; but I can take care of myself—as I have done before—and surely, surely, I will not forget that I am Otis Garner's wife, and as his wife, must act as he would have me act. As his wife I am too proud to beg or borrow," concluded the little princess, rising to her feet as if to end the interview.

Beau Brummell arose to his feet also.

"I honor and respect you the more, little Mildred; I may call you, may I not? considering how intimate Otis and I are. But I was bound to make the offer, not knowing how you might be situated. And, now, I bid you good-night. I shall call again before many days, for I feel sure of a sort of guardian—being the friend of Mr. Garner—of his little wife."

He pressed her hand and went away.

"By all the roses that ever grew!" he muttered, as he went down the steps, "but the little creature has spunk! I shall have to 'make haste slowly' with her. With what an air she spoke of her wily duties and rights! I could have laughed—only it would not do. Wearing her wedding-dress in expectation of a visit from the young scapegrace! She looked like a seraph in it, too. She grows prettier every time, see her. Otis, little as he prizes her, would hardly have gone away to-night without coming here, had he known that his dear Brummell was paying a friendly visit to his forsaken beauty."

"I have a mind to improve my acquaintance with his other lady-love, also. Miss Appleton is a great catch now—superb girl, too! If one could only settle down to a Benedict's life! It is deemed hard to have to always live by one's wits. To settle down on the certainty of two millions might pay for the sacrifice. I shall call on Miss Appleton as soon as the proper time arrives."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 367.)

An exchange remarks that the matrimonial fever has broken out again—the tie-tuss.

THE MYSTERY OF DEATH.

BY HARRIET ESTHER WARNER.

Through the city's din and tumult comes the slow and stately tread Of a funeral cortege bearing back to Earth its honored dead; As we pause to gaze a moment at the somber, grand array

We wonder if the angels greet the soul that's passed away.

Splendid is this mournful pageant as it passes, moving slow; And the sound of muffled drum-beats echo solemn, faint and low;

Something grand and something awful thrills us as a bell's sad toll

Sounds in strokes whose dreary cadence tells us of a passing soul.

Little reeks he who is lying 'neath that flower-strewn velvet pall; With eyes closed in dreamless slumber, eyes that shut at Death's stern call!

Him the world delights to honor is within that coffin hid, And the cypress and the laurel rest together on the lid.

Those strong hands so calmly folded on that cold and pulseless breast; Is their work forever finished, have they gained an endless rest?

Those firm lips now closed and icy, have they secrets deep to tell?

Did he hear, when Earth grew misty, the Death-angel sound his knell?

Did the gates of Heaven open? Was a golden stair let down?

For the cross the mortal wearers did the spirit gain a crown?

Did a band of white-robed angels meet him at the shining gate?

Did he find above a city where the blessed ever wait?

Vain, oh, vain, is all this asking! Death is dumb, and cold the grave; And angels keep the secrets that our wondering spirits crave; Lips closed by Death's icy fingers will not open to reply; All we press to know so eager Death will tell us by-and-by.

Silver Sam;

OR,

The Mystery of Deadwood City.

BY COLONEL DELLE SARA.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NOT THE MAN.

The miner gazed upon the beautiful girl, an expression of astonishment written upon his features.

"I beg your pardon," he said, after a moment's pause; "I fear that I do not understand you."

"I will repeat my speech," the girl replied, the smile still upon her lips, but yet she was evidently annoyed by his remark. "I said, 'Once again, Mr. William Jones—Montana—or whatever else you may be pleased to call yourself, we are face to face.'"

Again Montana stared, again he appeared to be totally at a loss to comprehend the meaning of the words.

An expression of impatience escaped from Miss Campbell's red lips, and she tapped her dainty foot petulantly upon the white sand.

"Oh! you are playing your part very well indeed!" she exclaimed, "but do you think that you can deceive me?"

"I really beg your pardon, Miss," Montana replied, evidently embarrassed by the situation, "but I am afraid that you are laboring under some great mistake. If I understand you rightly, you think that we have met before and that I wish to deny the fact."

"You are denying the fact?" cried Miss Campbell, abruptly; "and you are not as wise as you used to be if you think that you can deceive me in this matter?"

"Miss, I am not denying the fact—I am only denying that it is a fact," Montana returned, coldly.

"Oh!" and Dianora's eyes flashed fire, "you have mistaken your vocation; you should have been a lawyer, you play with words so cleverly."

Montana shrugged his shoulders at the doubtful compliment but did not reply in words; calmly and quietly he gazed at the face of the beautiful girl who was now evidently in a state of high excitement.

"And this is my reward!" Dianora exclaimed. "I come to you prepared to lay at your feet wealth, station, power, everything that the heart of man can covet in this world! What is your ambition? for that you have some darling wish I know, or else you are not the man who won my girl's love long years ago. I have plenty of money and know how to use it. Money, like steam, or any other potent power, is useless to the fool who cannot make it his slave, but suffers it to master him. Would you be a giant in the stock exchange? I know the way to

as I hold my mine here I can get that. I ain't got no ambition at all, Miss; it ain't in me."

"You have given me my answer now, even though you deny your identity," Diana said, quietly.

Montana looked puzzled for a moment; he had expected a stormy outbreak, and the calmness of the girl surprised him.

"Yes, Miss, I suppose that you may consider it a sort of answer."

"You prefer your home here amid these wild scenes and lawless surroundings to all that I can offer in the way of luxury and wealth?"

"Well, I haven't any right to accept such things from you, Miss," Montana answered, bluntly.

"Oh! enough of that!" Diana cried, with a gesture of impatience. "I know very well that you are the man I take you to be."

"They call me William Jones."

"And call you wrongly that do so?" the girl cried, vehemently. "Your name is Robert Peyton, your birthplace, Fredericksburg, on the Rappahannock. You married me in Chicago ten years ago; just six days our honeymoon lasted and then you disappeared, and I have never set eyes on you since, until I saw you in Deadwood last evening."

Montana smiled; it was plain that the persistence of the woman amused him.

"I see, Miss, that it ain't of the least use to argue with you," he said; "you're set in your notion, but I'm not the man."

"For the last time then—your refusal?"

"I'm not the man!" he repeated.

"You prefer a miner's hard, uncertain toil to the station and wealth I offer?"

"Yes, Miss, I do," Montana replied, decidedly. "Every man to his fancy; I had rather live here in peace and quiet than mix again with the big world. I prefer it."

"And you prefer Mercedes Kirkley to me?" Montana started as he had trodden on a rattlesnake and heard the warning wail of the spotted monster sounding in the air.

A gleam of triumph shone in Diana's clear blue eyes as she noted the effect of her cleverly-aimed shaft.

"I have pierced you at last, eh?" she exclaimed.

"You have astonished me, that's all," Montana responded, contemptuously.

"Oh, you are very clever!" Miss Campbell exclaimed, full of wrath; "but, clever as you are, you will find that I am a match for you."

"I am your wife—the law has never stepped between us; you have forgotten me for this little pale-faced slip of a girl—a child who had better be playing with her dolls than thinking of lovers! Are you blind, Peyton, that you prefer Mercedes Kirkley to Diana Campbell?"

"You are mistaken, Miss; the lady you speak of is nothing to me, nor I to her," Montana said, coldly. "But if the case was different, and we were lovers, I rather think that all the world combined wouldn't separate us!"

"You defy me?" and Diana rose, pale with anger.

"If that is a defiance, Miss, then I defy you," Montana answered, half turning away.

"Wait and hear me for a moment!" Miss Campbell cried, her face flashing in her great blue eyes. "You have scorned me and my love, and now it is war between us. This girl—I will tear her from your arms; this mine which you think so valuable—I will wrest it from you; firmly fixed as you are here in Deadwood, I will make you curse the hour you first set foot in this region! Your friends shall drop away as the dried and withered leaf falls from the tree when the autumn winds blow! And then, when at last I crush you to the earth, helpless, perhaps you will remember that there is one true heart in the world that has never ceased to beat for you, and will be willing even then—as I shall be—to forgive and forget!" And then Miss Campbell swept proudly away, as fair a girl in her glorious beauty as ever the Western sun shone upon.

CHAPTER XXIV.

O'TOOLE TELL THE GREAT.

CALMLY Montana watched the lady depart, no trace of emotion upon his marble-like face. Miss Campbell's threats had made no more impression than her suppers. "You have scorned me and my love, and now it is war between us. This girl—I will tear her from your arms; this mine which you think so valuable—I will wrest it from you; firmly fixed as you are here in Deadwood, I will make you curse the hour you first set foot in this region! Your friends shall drop away as the dried and withered leaf falls from the tree when the autumn winds blow! And then, when at last I crush you to the earth, helpless, perhaps you will remember that there is one true heart in the world that has never ceased to beat for you, and will be willing even then—as I shall be—to forgive and forget!" And then Miss Campbell swept proudly away, as fair a girl in her glorious beauty as ever the Western sun shone upon.

Around the bend in the gulch walked the girl and disappeared from sight.

And then Montana fell to meditating.

"My friends shall fall from me, eh?" he muttered, seating himself upon the rock from whence Diana had risen. "The mine shall be wrested from my possession. Mort Campbell, esquire, butcher and statesman, is to perform that little operation, I presume; but, maybe, it won't be so easy a job as they think! So far, since I have sojourned in Deadwood, I have kept my hands off my fellow-men; I have jumped no man's claim—have kept out of every one's way; I have let every one alone, and have trusted that the compliment might be returned; but if it is to be war, why then, they shall have it, red hot! Mercedes! too! So they couple our names together, do they? I have been a fool to allow any one to see that I liked the girl. What has such a man as I am to do with a fresh young heart? Mine was seared, long ago. There is a mystery about the girl, too. For the past ten days I have avoided her, and she, instead of being offended, has taken pains to seek me out here. Does she really care for me? or is it but the natural coquetry of woman annoyed at the defection of an admirer, and determined to again lure the truant bird to her feet? Is there such a thing in this life as a true and honest-hearted woman? I've tried two of them and found them both equally false and fickle. I ought to be satisfied, but I suppose it is man's nature to long for a woman's love. Bah! what an idiot I am! I talk like a love-sick boy. Mercedes is nothing to me nor I to her. No more will I linger under the spell, charm she ever so wisely. They may beat me in this coming fight, but at the worst I can turn red-skin and in the wild life of the wilderness forget the wrongs that civilized man has inflicted upon me."

And just at this period the miner's meditations were interrupted by a musical voice, deeply tinged with the rich brogue of old Ireland, chanting a stave loudly down the gulch:

"I'm a gentleman born, an' I scorn a trade, I'd be a rich man if me debts was paid."

And then around the bend in the ravine came a stout fellow, clad in the blue of Uncle Sam, and carrying a shot-gun upon his shoulder.

Montana recognized him at once as a soldier of the garrison, by name Dermot O'Toole, and reputed to be about as hard a case as had ever kept step to the music of the march. More days of the year O'Toole spent in the guard-house than at his quarters, and from his blundering, quarrelsome disposition he was a nuisance alike to both the officers and men of his regiment.

Not that O'Toole was naturally a rascal, but he had a quick temper, drank to excess whenever he could procure liquor, and then was never happy until he had got into a fight with

sombody. Punishment had little effect upon him, for he never could be convinced that he was at all in the wrong, but always looked upon himself as being a very much abused individual.

Montana was very well acquainted with the soldier, having, with his natural love for fair play, interfered once to save him from being pretty roughly handled by a party of miners from one of the mountain gulches with whom O'Toole had succeeded in quarreling. With the usual disdain for numbers, so common to the Celt in liquor, the soldier had defied the whole party to mortal combat, and was being well pounded when Montana, reluctant to see a man beaten when he was so drunk as to be hardly able to stand, got in between the combatants, and, aided by a few others, succeeded in stopping the row.

O'Toole had been lugged off to the fort by some of the townsmen, and Montana had not happened to encounter him since the day of the affray; in fact, the doughty Irishman had spent the better portion of the time since that occasion in "durance vile," the guard-house having held him prisoner.

"The top of the mornin' to you, sorr," said the Irishman, as he came up the gulch.

"How are you?" Montana responded.

"Foine, sorr, as foine as silk, bedad!"

"Out gunnin'?"

"Yis, sorr, it's huntin' I am, d'ye mind? Do ye think that I'd be after findin' a buffalo beyond?" and O'Toole pointed up the gulch.

"Nary buffalo!" was the terse reply.

"Is it a deer, thin, that I'll shoot?"

"You might find a deer up at the head of the gulch."

"Sorra a wan of me cares that it is, as long as it's somethin' that I kin get a crack at, and the soldier came close to where the miner sat on the bowlder, looked around him mysteriously, and his rough and ill-favored face assumed a cunning expression.

"It's a gentleman ye air, Mister Montana?" he said, cautiously, and in a low voice, barely above a whisper.

"Yes, I hope so," Montana added, considerably astonished at the manner of the soldier.

"Your word's as good as yer bond, an' both of them are fast-class!"

"Well, I hope so."

"It's a foine man ye air, sorr; if it hadn't been for you, sorr, it's a dead man I'd be this blessed mornin', d'ye mind?"

"I guess they would have battered you up pretty well."

"Oh, no! it isn't that, sorr!" O'Toole exclaimed, with great dignity. "Divil a batter at all. I would have kilt every man of the crowd, an' thin it's a hangin' matter that would have been to the fore!"

"Do you think so?" asked Montana, gravely, rather amused at the view the Irishman took of the affray in which he had been so well pounded.

"You saved me from murthin' the blagards, an' I'll do as much for you any time, sorr."

"Oh, that's all right," the miner replied, carelessly.

"Mister Montana, it's a foine man ye air, an' a man of judgment; it's the learnin' ye have thik in yer head, sorr; an' now look at me! I'm an O'Toole! It's a member of parliament I ought to be this day across the say, if I had me rights, d'ye mind! It's the blue blood of the O'Toole's I have in me veins, an' me grandfather was a dook an' me grandmother a dookess, an' if it hadn't been for my father marryin' a poor girl—she was a Malone—the second darter of Cock-eyed Malone, the hoss-docter, beyond at Ballybrigham, mebbe it's knowin' to him ye air—"

Montana shook his head.

"Well, it's all the same. Yis, sorr; if it hadn't been for that same weddin' it's a dook, sorr, I'd be this day wid lashin' of gould!" exclaimed the Celt, impressively.

"It was bad for you, old man," observed the miner.

O'Toole felt encouraged by this sympathy. As a general thing his relation of his high descent and ducal rights were received with shouts of laughter.

"Yis, sorr, it was bad! but it's the heart of a dook that I have within me for all that same. It's a gentleman, sorr; sorra bad luck to me whin I forget it! though I do condescend to carry a musket and drill like a nagur. Ye did me a service, sorr, an' Dermot O'Toole is the b'y wid a memory. Ye have innies, sorr, an' it's flat on the broad of your back they'd like to lay yees! Wan of dem—an' it's a high cooalorum he is in Deadwood!—sed to me, sed he, 'O'Toole, it's a foine boy ye air, but sein so much in the guard-house had for your health; now I can help as no other man can. There is a chap in the town beyond—this was in the guard-house, d'ye mind!—bitter bad luck to it—'Montana they call him; and it's a poker-player he is; now I'll give you a hundred dollars to play poker wid him. If ye win, all right; if ye lose, all right, too, for thin ye can complain to me that he has ch'atted ye out of your money, an' it's drummed out of the town I'll have him.'"

Montana listened, a little incredulously it must be said, to this tale, for he knew of no reason why any officer of the garrison should wish to injure him.

"I'm very much obliged," he said, perceiving that the Irishman expected an acknowledgment.

"Yar welkin, sorr; shure! me blood wouldn't let me harm the man that did me service; more power to your elbow! take care of yerself, allanna!"

And then, with a series of winks and nods, the soldier passed on up the valley, leaving Montana considerably astonished.

"Is it truth, or a drunken fancy?" he questioned.

Enemies seemed to be rising thick around him.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HOLLOW TREE.

THE slouchy figure of the Irishman had hardly disappeared before Lige Hallowell came round the lower bend of the gulch.

The appearance of the tall form of his partner recalled to Montana's mind the threat of the girl.

"My friends shall fall from me, eh?" he muttered, "and the first one will be Hallowell, I presume. Already this tawny siren has cast her spell upon him. I don't blame the man, though, for she is a glorious woman; few in this world to equal her. How the deuce did she find out anything about Mercedes! Are our names already coupled together in the gossip of the town? I have striven to keep away from her, but she seeks me persistently. Is she in love with me? She does not act sometimes as a girl should act toward the man she loves, and if she does not love me why does she seek me? Ah! those women are riddles past the comprehension of the wisest man."

The near approach of Hallowell put an end to the muttered meditations of the miner.

The tall son of the State of Maine was evidently

laboring under considerable excitement, for he had hurried up the gulch as fast as his legs could carry him, without really running.

"Say, Montana, something's up!" he cried.

"How so?"

"You know that imp of a greeny—post-of-freogre ny?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's skulking round down in the gulch below in a 'tarnal mysterious manner. I see'd him afore he see'd me, an' he was a-gallopin' up an' down a-lookin' at the trees an' muttering to himself jest as if he had gone crazy. Then he happened to catch sight of me, an' the way he dived into the bush was a caution."

"Well, that was queer."

"Yas, and then I jest slid into the bush, jest out of curiosity, you know, to see what the critter was arter."

"And did you discover?"

"Nary a diskiver," Hallowell replied, laconically.

"No?"

"No, sir, hoss-fly! Jest as the galoot poked his head out of the brush, as if he was watching that nobody was watching him, along come Miss Campbell and he dusted in ag'in. Say!" ejaculated Hallowell, suddenly, "what in thunder did you say to the gal? She looked as mad as a hornet when she went down the gulch."

"Oh, nothing in particular," answered Montana, carelessly.

"If it ain't pushing you too hard—what did she want, anyway?" asked Hallowell, abruptly, all his Eastern curiosity aroused.

"Her father wants to buy the Little Montana mine," Montana answered, quietly.

"I s'pose you said no, of course?"

"That is my answer to everybody; I don't wish to sell the mine."

"But, partner, don't you think that we could make a good thing of it?" Hallowell asked, after a little pause.

"Let well enough alone—that's my motto!"

"Well, you've got more backbone to you than I have; I reckon that if that splendiferous critter had axed me to sell I shouldn't have had the grit to refuse."

"It's rather late in the day for any woman to twist me round her finger," Montana observed, with scorn on his lip.

"I reckon though that you wouldn't be quite so stiff about it if it had been Mercedes instead of this one, hey?" Hallowell remarked, slyly.

"What makes you think so?" Montana was not pleased, as was plainly evident from his face.

"Kinder guessed it, that's all," Hallowell replied, with a good-natured snicker. "Oh, it ain't a bit of use for you to try to get out of it. All Deadwood knows that that ain't any other man in the town stands any chance with Mercedes while a chap about your size is around."

This confident declaration did not tend to improve Montana's temper.

Deadwood might find more profit in attending to its own business," he observed, "than troubling itself about my affairs."

"I reckon that you're the captain of Mercedes' Own," Hallowell added, facetiously, "and it ain't of any use for you to try to deny the fact."

"Well, I shan't attempt it then. I don't care what they say about myself, but it can't be pleasant for the girl, particularly when there's no truth in the story."

In answer Hallowell put his tongue in his cheek and winked significantly.

"Too thin?" Montana queried.

"Oh, yee! you can't pull the wool over my eyes in that way, you know. Gosh all hemlock! do you s'pose that any mortal man, that ain't a fool, will believe that that air gal travel Montana mine, jest for the fun of the thing? Why, it ain't in the nature of the beast!"

"A willful man will have his own way, so I won't attempt to argue the point with you," rejoined Montana, rising as he spoke. "But, one thing you can be sure of, Miss Kirkley won't wish to buy the mine, and therefore she won't try her fascination upon me."

"Sho!" cried Hallowell, quickly.

Montana understood the caution.

"What's the matter?"

"That leetle greeny cuss—"

"Well?"

"He jest stuck his head round the bend, and then when he caught sight of us he bobbed back ag'in quicker'n a wink!"

"What is the fellow up to?"

"No good, 'tween yer best," replied Hallowell, decidedly. "He's a p'ison leetle cuss! He tried to stick a bad half-dollar on me at the post-office, and he wasn't a-going to take it back nuther, but I jest told him, I'd take it out of his hide if it upset the whole durned United States government!"

"And he refunded?"

"You bet, and the old deacon, too, tried to lie me out of it, and swar that it was a good piece. My opinion of the deacon is that his religion may be good enough for Sunday, but it ain't worth a durn on week days."

"The boy is evidently up to something," added Montana, in his quiet way; "he is watching us now, hid in the pines at the turn. He's down flat on the ground, but I can see his head stuck through the branches." The miner had an eye like a hawk.

"Say, let's dust into the shanty and watch him through the door. He ain't prowling around here for nothing now, you can bet all your stamps on that!"

"I hardly think that it is worth while."

"He's up to something now, I tell yer!" Hallowell persisted; "come on!"

"All right."

Carelessly the two strolled off in the direction of the shanty, opened the door and entered, closing the door after them.

For full five minutes long-legged Tim remained motionless in his ambush under the spreading branches of the pines, and then, satisfied at last that the two owners of the Little Montana gulch were not likely to come out for some little time, he wriggled himself out from his covert in the pine needles and rose to his feet. Then he advanced to the trail which ran up through the gulch and proceeded to examine the trees on the right hand side of the path.

"By golly!" he muttered, "I don't see any holler oak tree! He sed a holler oak tree on the right hand side of the gulch between the town and the Little Montana mine, Thar's the Little Montana—I'm close onto it, an' I don't see any holler tree at all! Mebbe it's cut down, but I don't see any fresh stumps 'bout hyer—plenty of old ones!"

The overgrown boy advanced within a hundred yards of the bowlder whereon Montana had sat, and then he suddenly spied a scrubby oak tree with a small cavity in the trunk on his right hand.

He paused—looked doubtfully at the tree.

"That's an oak—but it ain't a holler tree; it's got a hole in it; mebbe it's the one, arter

all! Anyway, I can't hunt all day for it. If it ain't the right one, I kin tell the man when I see him."

Then Tim glanced carefully around him, saw that the gulch was deserted, sidled cautiously up to the tree, shoved something into the cavity, and, after another glance around to be sure that he had not been observed, took to his heels and disappeared around the bend in the gulch.

The moment the figure of the boy vanished from sight the door of the shanty opened and the partners came forth.

"Didn't I tell you the leetle cuss was up to something?" Hallowell exclaimed. "Did you see what he did?"

"No; I couldn't exactly make out."

"Why, he stuck something in the hole in that tree."

"And I saw him close to the tree."

"And I see'd him stick something into it, but I'll have it out!" Straight then to the tree Hallowell strode, and shoved his big paw into the cavity, while Montana followed closely behind.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 362.)

"ONLY A WORD."

BY "DUNBAR."

Only a word, that was spoken
Careless, and no one to blame;
Only a word; yet a token
Of misery, heartache and shame.

Only a word; like an arrow
Flying and breaking a heart;
Only a word it will harrow—
Only two lives it will part!

Only a word; bitter anguish,
Long separation, regret;
Now in sorrow must languish,
Learning how hard to forget.

Only a word: years are making
Rifts, growing wide apart;
Time can alone ease the aching—
Time can alone peace impart.

Only a word: all is ended;
Broken the vows made before,
Blasted the hopes they had blended—
Only a word; nothing more!

Only a word, that was spoken
Careless, and no one to blame;
Only a word; yet a token
Of misery, heartache and shame!

A Little Dressmaker's First of April.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

"Now remember, Miss Myers, a double row of half-plaiting of the lighter shades, headed by a puffing of the darker, and be sure you loop the corners tight enough."

"I'll do my best, Miss Carrie," was the quiet response of the little dressmaker, as she smoothed and straightened the folds of lustrous silk and soft cashmere which covered her bed, and which Carrie Harold's careless fingers had tossed into sad disarray.

"And be sure you have it done by Tuesday night," was Carrie's parting direction, as with her friend Julie Kingman she left the little dressmaker's cottage, and went to ransack all the stores and drive the clerks mad with impatience, in search of a particular shade of buttons to match the cashmere suit.

"Now, Julie, go home with me and spend the rest of the day, and we'll hatch up a joke to fool some one to-morrow," said Carrie, when at last they had finished their shopping.

"To-morrow is the first of April, isn't it? I had forgotten all about it," said Julie.

"I hadn't, and I'm just dying for some fun! Why shall we do, Julie? Who shall we play off a joke on?"

"Oh, I don't know! There's that prim little dressmaker—wouldn't it be fun to fool her somehow?"

"Well, how? Oh, I have it! I have it!" cried Carrie, clapping her hands. "Let's write her a love-letter! I'll do it, and never had one in her life. Let's make her an offer from somebody! She'll be sure to believe it's all genuine, and we'll plan to watch the joke, and see her make a goose of herself! Oh, that will be neat!"

"Won't it? Who shall we make believe the letter is from?"

"I don't know—we'll study that up."

"How will your Uncle Dick do, Carrie? He's a rich old bachelor, you know, and never pays any attention to his nieces, though they would be glad enough to get him."

"The very thing! Julie, you're a genius! She will never suspect him of a joke. But we mustn't let him find it out, I tell you, or we'll catch a good scolding."

So home the two thoughtless conspirators tripped, and spent the afternoon "hatching up" as they called it, the letter which was to disturb the peace of the quiet little dressmaker, and make so much fun for themselves.

The next day—the eventful first—little Miss Myers sat alone in her plain, new sitting-room, her tidy-made bed, as usual covered with a shining tider of feminine fripperies, her busy fingers snipping with her sharp scissors, or hovering over the red cushion, bristling with short needles and crooked pins, ever and anon guiding her whirling machine over a smooth seam.

Little Miss Myers was very busy, and sometimes very lonely and very tired, but the gay dresses must be finished, so she only paused long enough to brown a bit of toast and make a cup of tea for her solitary dinner, and then to work again.

Just after noon a rap came at Miss Myers' door, and a boy handed her a letter.

Letters seldom came to the little dressmaker's humble home, so she looked in hesitating surprise at the bold superscription, but it was undoubtedly her own name, "Miss Susie Myers."


—and as the boy ran away, she went back into her little room, and opened her letter.

Surprise changed to amazement as she glanced at the name signed to it—wonder, confusion, and at last pleasure were all blended in the expression of Miss Myers' plain, sweet face, as she read.

Could she believe her eyes? Credit her senses! The letter was an offer of marriage from Mr. Dick Harold, the richest gentleman of the village, and it said—strangest of all—that he had loved the quiet little woman, whom nobody noticed, for a long time.

Poor, little,

NEW YORK, APRIL 7, 1877.

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The Empress' Laces.

Poor Eugene! I wonder if you would not smile, if you could know how lace-mad the women of Gotham have gone over these fairy fabrics that you ordered in those riotous, feverish days before the Empire tottered to its fall, and you and yours were forced to flee into exile. But it is our way, Eugene—the way of Americans—to turn wild with excitement over any little bit of foreignness that comes to our shores. No matter how much better we have at home, we adore that which comes from abroad with a supreme self-abandonment and ridiculous indiscriminate, that

in brilliant colors, so cobweb-fine that the entire wrap may be drawn through a lady's finger-ring—think of the mutability of nations, and the fickleness of fortune, that suddenly reduced an empire to a republic, and a royal family to exile and comparative beggary!

Still the crowd surges about the Empress' laces—"Did she ever wear them?" "Why not?" "Was she not rich enough to buy them?" "Will any one buy them here?" and a thousand silly questions; and "Lovely!" "Magnificent!" "Wonderful!" "Superb!" "exquisite!" "So perfect!" "Such loveliness!" "Poetically sweet!" "Divine!" and a tornado of adjectives that make one feel like saying, sweetly of one's-self—f, but never mind.

A PARSON'S DAUGHTER.

But, you see, we cannot accomplish these delights which appear so pleasant and nice in prospective, and it is a most excellent idea that we cannot, for we should all make ninnies of ourselves, and would long for the good times to return when affairs were better managed than

Things Lying Around.

The boot-jack is the most unpretentious of all articles of furniture, and differs in many respects from a portable wardrobe. In walking over the floor in your stockings you manage, if you are a good stepper, to step on the raised end of it, and it flops up, but your shin prevents it from flopping too far—if it was not for your shin there is no telling just where the thing might go. It is handier than a sewing

Topics of the Time.

The Indian relics discovered by the Rev. J. G. Cass in a mound near Davenport, Iowa, continue to evoke discussion. They consist of tablets of dark-colored slate, with pictorial engravings, one of which represents a funeral pyre or a similar scene, and another which shows a burial place; twenty-two stars and the sun and moon are also shown, and there are two lines of written language in unknown characters. On the reverse of the tablet, which is rather less than a foot square, are several groups of figures, which are sketches of men, several quadrupeds, (including two mastodons), some birds and trees. Another tablet has a dial with four concentric circles, within which are marked the four cardinal points, and the lines of the dial are supposed to represent the signs of the zodiac. There is no doubt that these relics were found along with human remains, among layers of shell, in a mound. If put there for the purpose of being buried with the dead, they were placed. All authorities agree that if the relics are genuine they are by far the most important archaeological treasures yet found in this coun-

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*See *Life of Admiral Paul Jones*, in *Beadle's Dime Biographical Library*—a very romantic and most entertaining volume—in which this cruise of the *Bon Homme Richard* and her most terrible fight with the *Serapis* is told in detail.

tie. It is forcibly said that "Heaven allows nothing to be destroyed." There has not been a single drop of water wasted since the creation. The decomposed elements of the present autumn will supply alimant for the next spring. Economy, rigid economy, is one of the laws of nature; and we shall not realize the "good time coming" until we are careful and economical.

BY MARO O. ROLFE.

BY CHARLES MORRIS,

BY CHARLES MORRIS,
AUTHOR OF "NOBODY'S BOY," ETC.

CHAPTER XVI

TWO OLD COMPANIONS.

ain't dropped his store toggery and come out in his old rig. I can smell a rat now, and a big one."

Will was hardly recognizable in the dilapida-

To-day she was red and blooming, and he

"I am a woman, and mistress of my own actions. I will go."

"This is madness, girl. Go where? What is to become of you? Who is to take care of you?"

"I am not friendless, sir. I can find refuge with people who will consider me before their own self-interest."

"You must not, you shall not act like a spoiled child," he said, vigorously. "I never thought that you would accuse me of lack of interest in you. I that have done so much for you, far more than you know or conjecture. If you knew all you would not treat me so. If you knew all I knew all! What is there for me to know?"

"I cannot tell you now, Jennie. I have been more a friend to you than you imagine, and it pains me to have you turn on me in this way."

"This is a new mystery, Mr. Leonard," replied Jennie. "I cannot engage to be grateful for something I never heard of, and do not seem likely to hear of. I know you only as my guardian, the custodian of money lent by my father. You have been kind and considerate to an unruly child, I admit. But you are in this case neither kind nor considerate."

"I am more than your guardian," he replied. "There is a secret connected with you which has been charged to reveal when you came of age."

"A secret! A disgraceful secret!" she cried. "How could I, a child, have incurred any disgrace? What is this secret? I am not afraid of it. These half-revealings are tenfold worse than silence. Does it affect my father?"

"Your father. He was an honorable man. There is no whisper against him."

"My father! You emphasize this as if he was not my father. I demand to know what you mean by these innuendoes. It is not fair, sir, to revenge yourself on my just indignation by such an insinuation as this."

"I have said too much, Jennie. More than I thought of saying at this time. I withdraw it all."

"Withdraw!" she cried, with a scornful accent. "You cannot withdraw a storm that has been let loose. Silence now is worse than the truth. What am I to think of such language? Who is my father and what has he done to disgrace me? I must have an answer."

"I did not speak of disgrace. There are misfortunes that are no disgrace."

"What misfortune, then?"

"I will say no more now. I have said too much already. Some day when you are cooler, and will not think me revengeful I will tell you to what I allude."

"And meanwhile leave me to miserable conjectures," she said, sinking wearily in her chair. "You have no occasion for this. Dismiss this matter from your mind for the present. But you must give up your foolish idea of leaving my house."

"You have driven me to it," she said, flushing up again.

"You are blinding yourself now, Jennie, and wronging me."

"I don't know. I don't know anything!" she cried, passionately. "I only know that my lover is in prison, that he is innocent, and that you have placed him there. I know no more, and can hear no more now."

With a hasty movement she rose and left the room, her face haunting him with its pain and reproach.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 365.)

BY THE SEA

BY WILL R. CIBULKA

I wandered alone by the sad, sad sea,
By the restless sea, by the storm-tossed sea,
And thought of the years which had hurried by
Since its crest had kissed the door of the sky.

Oh, cruel sea! oh, beautiful sea!
Too true are the stories you tell unto me,
Through thy angry murmurings, thy far-fetched
Ed moans,
Bespeaking thy terrors in unearthly tones.

Oh, sun-kissed sea! oh, treacherous sea!
How many lives have been given to thee!
How many forms once fraught with life
Hath been snatched by thee with hands so
Rife!

Oh, passionate sea! oh, death-like sea!
Oh, far-sweeping billows, a hasty, so free!
Will the day ever dawn when with tenderness
Thou wilt give up thy dead, and ask redress?

The Red Cross:

OR,
The Mystery of Warren-Guiderland.
A STORY OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LEARNING LOVE OF LOVE.

It was well on in the afternoon when Herman entered the drawing-room of Colonel Valrose's handsome house in Lexington avenue, bearing to Cordelia Colonel Valrose's request.

Sixteen hours had passed since he had parted from her in the Hippodrome, sending her to protect her invalid mother while he bore to some unknown asylum her two fathers, the long-loved but only would-be one, and the stranger who was her real one.

The blow struck, and by Herman's advice and aid; how would she meet him, now that she had had time for the speechless sufferings of the reaction? Now that she, who had idolized her mother fainting and writhing under the anguish of the inexplicable circumstances of the past night; now that she had taken time to look into her own heart with its dim and blasted future before her; now that she saw herself stripped of all the honor, wealth and pleasure that makes life agreeable to the modern woman, and committed to poverty, obscurity and secret shame, as the sole staff and stay of her hapless mother!

She had nobly refused to count on the Warren-Guiderland fortune as long as Griffith Thetford, and after him, Jonas Kercheval, lived. She knew that Colonel Valrose's money, what he had of it, belonged by right to Margaret and not to Madeline, and that Jonas Kercheval had none to endow Madeline with—that he was only prevented from claiming Madeline as Valrose claimed Margaret by his poverty and madness; how would Cordelia meet the stranger who had brought all this to pass?

Stay—there was yet an outlet for Cordelia! No need for her to immolate herself on the altar of filial devotion; no need for her to suffer fear and poverty by her mother's side; a door stood widely open for her escape, she had but to pass through into distinction and wealth.

Griffith Thetford wished to marry her. A curious frown settled upon Griffith's brow as he thus mused; he rose uneasily and paced the length of the apartment, turning the new idea over in his mind with more discomfort than any change in his own circumstances, however disastrous, could have caused him.

Unaware of Adalgisa's last stroke of business, and only remembering Cordelia's ignorance of Thetford's secret affliction and the crime Gairlyn supposed him to have committed, recalling too the pleasant youth and beauty of the heir-at-law—"what," thought he, "could be more natural? She will marry him now if she would have refused him before; she is but a helpless lady, unaccustomed to the struggle for subsistence; what else can she do?"

With the frown still on his face he heard a rustle behind him; Cordelia was here, holding out her two hands with her own proud yet child-like smile.

"Well," said the philosopher, as inconsequently as any other man whose senses had been bedazzled by a charming woman. "We meant to say: 'Is this kind salutation, this confiding approach, that beautiful and seductive smile the expression of your real feelings toward me?' But he only said: 'Well!' in his usual curt, straightforward, ringing voice, and his eyes melting from gloom to warmth; and the lady heard the full tone and read the sunny glance,

and suspected not the heart-throb that accompanied them.

When they were seated side by side upon the sofa, he facing her with a keen watch upon her, she answered:

"It is indeed well; I thank God and you, sir," (this she said with a solemn reverence that sat passing well upon her, so that the skeptic felt rather than thought; "after all, religion seems but a bowled grace was a woman's faith.")

The wind as our Holy Bible says—has been 'tempered to the shorn lamb' in a manner which I can never express enough gratitude for. My poor mother caught just enough of the tracés last night to fly to the conclusion, aided by my inevitable hesitation in making any explanation of his absence—that Colonel Valrose had been killed by an accident; she has lain ever since in a stupor, which the physicians assure me will save both life and reason. The worst is over, she need never know the truth now. But what is the truth? Ah! Dr. Herz, my father—Colonel Valrose, I mean, has sunk low in your estimation no doubt, but we who knew him best, mother and I, love him faithfully; yet I have had plenty of time in her darkness and silent chamber to eat my heart out in anxiety on his account."

As the gentle creature spoke thus, without the slightest attempt at tragedy or sensation, Berthold thought how beyond all praise and admiration was woman's love, when its quality was this; and wondered what grand deed that poets have sung and the world applauded, was not nobler than this, that a girl whose life was wrecked by the folly of one who was not even her lover, should still love and cling to him, knowing his offense!

But he said nothing of these thoughts; instead he told her the particulars of the interview between Kercheval and Valrose; ending with Valrose's request that she would grant him a farewell.

Cordelia bent down her face that her gushing tears of joy should not be seen; her little clasped hands were trembling in her lap.

She had purchased his love, then—no better still, his love had been hers all the time; oh, God! how would she have gathered her, trembling with unspeakable ecstasy, to his heart, open for her, since he had loved her even then!

"You shrink from the useless suffering?" said Berthold, mistaking her silence. She lifted her face, irradiated.

"No—no—it is pure rapture that holds me dumb!" she faltered; "I shall have a chance of telling him how I adore him—how I sympathize with him; I shall console him, my dear—dear—"

She checked the agitated outburst, she could say no more.

The great scientist looking on, coveted the woman's love with a sudden, fierce, craving hunger.

He put out his hand; he grasped that slender, graceful, girlish form as it swayed with emotion before him, and he gathered her, trembling with unspeakable ecstasy, to his heart, open for her, since he had loved her even then!

"Woman of my heart—adored!" he muttered, in his own language, scarce knowing that he spoke.

She rested one moment, dumb with a great astonishment, and her eyes, blue and true as heaven, swept up to his in affright. His look—and his whisper, for she spoke German—told her all, and she fled from his clasp, pale, trembling, and covered with pain and shame, and gathering indignation, that he should so presume, as upon one already won. He too rose, scarcely less pale than she, with the shock of his own emotions, and dismay at what he had done.

"Forgive me!" he cried, with sudden intense earnestness and pleading, seeing her turning to leave him; "upon my oath, madam, the act was involuntary, and passed quick as the spark to the powder magazine. I knew it not till now; I love you, Miss—forgive me!"

He saw the pallor sweep away by a sudden, burning, brilliant blush, and how her bosom swelled and panted, and her clasped hands shook; but her long burnished lashes hid her eyes, and her lips were silent. The throes of terror lest he had offended her past forgiveness were forgotten in the gush of all-mastering exultation with which he recalled what had floated dimly in his mind once already, that she loved him.

He was at her side again, not touching her this time, for his reverence was equal to his love, but bending low over her, so that his emerald gaze drew her eyes to his, whether she would or no, and these souls looked at one another, almost as clearly as if no corporeal veil were between. And presently he put his exultant thought into speech.

"Yes—yes—it is true; she loves me, too!" he sighed, his usually calm, self-contained face transfigured with the eloquence of profound passion; and he held out his eager hands to her, wooing—wooing her!

Remember what thoughts the high-souled girl had had about the man; her instinctive recognition of his grand and lofty nature; the many engrossing reveries of which he was the hero; his motives, his life, his plan of existence—his past—all that goes to make up a man, and his constant themes; then the breathless moment last night when her spirit had stirred to his touch and tone with a sudden bewildering recognition of both as having come into her life once before.

It was now, that she saw him, and now, warm and passionate, and that look in his eyes, to wake her woman's heart from its long blind dream of maiden freedom, and to show her that this man was the law of her life, toward whom all her feelings surged with the sweet, unreasoning, tumultuous madness of woman's first love!

As his exultant whisper rushed by her, and his eyes burned into hers, his hands stealing upon hers, his heart beating loudly nearer and nearer, and his thoughts melting inch by inch into his arms, a thought—sudden, keen, keen as a knife in her bosom, flashed through her trance of happiness; it was, "This, my life's Lord, believes not in a God; dare I, loving him, so, place myself under his influence?"

And her rich blushes faded, and her eyes, steeped in love's intoxicating languor, shrank, blackening with a breathless, numbing pain.

In a dream she heard his words begin to flow, earnest, reverent, rich with a passion as yet unstirred by a single drop of the life of the highway of his life-path hither; thrilling and eloquent—only such gracious affection could be; but a knell was tolling all the while in Cordelia's heart, and her face was blenching slowly.

She turned upon him soon, interrupting the gentle voice, sending a great, gleaming through his craving heart with her first faltering murmur.

"Say—no—more!" gasped she, as if in flames, "this you ask is impossible."

He drew back, amazed, and looked at her. She stood before him motionless, breathless, vacant-eyed, like some young creature in its summer prime watching death approach. Only her lips moved, and they were white and dry. "Impossible! impossible!" she sighed.

"Why?" at last the German found breath to say, in a voice that was surely never his.

"Because I dare not!" she answered, feebly, and with a little quick motion of the hand, as if she would at once bless and bid him an eternal farewell, she moved away.

The man's passion has risen; strong as he is it is his master, and he acts perforce at its bidding. He stride after her, and barring her way, bends down and forces her to meet his glowing, resolute eyes.

"Madam, I have told you the truth. I love and would crave the happiness of making you mine. You also love me; in your eyes I read it—knowing this, then, why do you treat me so?" he said, urgently.

Seeing that he would not be put off, she stole herself to show him the hopeless abyss that yawned between them.

"It is all very simple," she moaned, folding and unfolding her hands upon her breast, as if the restless pain there would keep obtruding its words upon her notice. "You are so much stronger than poor I, that sooner or later you would merge my life into yours, and then, where would be my allegiance to the Creator of us both?"

In speechless amazement he heard; it had never once occurred to him that any abstract question could come between a man and his

chosen wife; they loved each other, was not that enough?

"If you were less admirable," Cordelia continued, mournfully, her clear eyes resting in unspeakable love and grief upon him, "if I could question ever so slightly the sincerity of your skepticism; if your life was less noble in its aim and its tenor; if I felt myself more your equal, intellectually and morally, and loved you less," she faltered in accents he had to strain his ears to catch, "I might, if I was weak and self-indulgent enough, be your wife. But now—you see? Good-by!"

And she would have escaped; but he caught her again, and, holding her fiercely, cried:

"But what has all this to do with us? Do you suppose I am fool or madman enough to wish to deprive my wife of her creed, as long as it smooths the roughnesses of her life-path and consoles her disappointment that it do not have it a delusion unworthy the credence of a philosopher? Do I desire philosophy in my wife? Ah! it is her woman's heart I desire, not a fellow student, at home equally with myself among the grave themes which occupy the man of letters. Cordelia, believe me, your objection is no objection at all."

She shook her head mutely; in his passionate clasp and under the lovely fire of his gaze, she felt her heart rising up to obscure the workings of her judgment; she gently and firmly pressed herself, retreated a little, and confronted him.

"I am only a woman, whose mind is but the poor little fish-pond compared with the ocean which is yours," she said, low-voiced; "when it comes to argument between us I am dumb. But I have my consolation: I have my convictions, my intuition; without reasoning at all I know just as well as though it had been logically proven that were I to marry you I could never rest in peace in my religious belief until I had seen you, and you also acknowledged a God. Wait!" (for he would have interrupted her with some slight scorn—"I am no bigot, no slave to any ecclesiastical form, and it would be little to me whether you followed any special formula or worshipped God according to the fashion of your own soul, but you would have to worship Him somehow, or else my life would be one long agony. If I loved you less, it would be different," she added, with simple pathos.)

Her hand that she was really speaking; the unalterable conviction of her soul, that this one point upon which they differed, trifling and visionary as he had deemed it, was a wall between them, wide as earth and high as Heaven. It seemed monstrous to him in that first moment of falling in love, that what he had never thought but a child's fond dream, the Christian's Immortal Hope, should have the power to blast the lives of two people who would otherwise have walked together, haloed by no ordinary glory of happiness.

"For this, this cruel fallacy, you sacrifice yourself and me!" he exclaimed, in bitter scorn. "So cramping is religious fanaticism that it dwarfs even such a spirit as yours—so pitifully self-centered that it outrages the most generous of men. Had I been as sagacious enough to affect a faith, you would have been quite satisfied, even had it begun and ended in profession."

"No, no—a thousand times no!" she exclaimed, with solemn severity. "I respect and revere you as you are; I should despise you if, for my sake—for any sake except Truth's, you professed to change your views."

"All the same you would prefer to wed a professor of Christianity, even though he were but a weakling, and would worship God no more in his heart than I do," he retorted, sardonically.

She made a passionate gesture of dissent, and then, in a sudden access of heart-yearning, she laid her tender hands upon his, and the great tears trembled on her lashes, cried: "I love you, I love you, I love you; you don't willfully reject belief in our God, only you have never turned your attention to that subject. Oh, do now spare a little of your great intellect, and some of your time, to looking into it—since you are so certain right in my heart, I will meet you half-way, and you shall yet know and confess Him!" And as the young creature spoke the fervid words, the philosopher felt a thrill, for in her dilated eye, exalted figure, and vital tone, he saw the echo of the prophet.

But he laughed bitterly and scoffingly, and turned his face away.

"Meantime," the low, delicate voice went on, while the tender hands tightened their loving clasp, "let us be friends, true, real friends—not that I hold this intimacy as a triumph, but of pleasure and convenience; I know I am very ignorant and untried, but I can appreciate so—so keenly!" she cried, raising those clear eyes to him as if he were a god; "and, after all, what does it matter if I can only love beyond sympathy? I could give you that. The reservoir seems to me to be inexhaustible, and you are the one in the world who can draw a single drop of it! At least as pertains to this phase of affection," she went on, dreamily, "I have loved many men, and I can tell you, entirely, ah, so differently! To love is indeed a necessity of my nature, and hitherto I have lavished all upon my mother and—and him. But you—oh, sir, let me love you in my own way, consecrate to friendship, prayer, night and day for the barrier that is between us to be removed; will you?"

"Adorable woman!" breathed her lover, carried away by her generous enthusiasm, "is it I, to whom your touch is rapture, whom you sue to permit me to love you as my friend?" And with tears in his eyes, he reverently pressed her hand to his quivering lips.

They resented themselves once more, hand in hand, both touched and exalted by the singular way of their coming together. And their last ended in their closely cementing the bond of a friendship, unique in its divine absence of all base passion, yet warm, true and ardent enough to satisfy the most tropical of natures.

For Herman was clever enough, and fortunate enough, to perceive, as soon as he had made his strange request, that this was the one woman in a thousand who was capable of friendship with a man, a friendship as free of earth-passion or self as if she also was a man; and, oh! rare to whom your touch is rapture, whom you sue to permit me to love you as my friend?"

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IDA

BY PAUL G. PROCTOR.

I know there is a Heaven, for her fair face
Weareth a beauty so divinely sweet,
So radiant, with the holy light of grace,
I kneel to worship lowly at her feet.

I know there is a Heaven, in her dark eyes
I read the golden promise old in story;
Of holier life in realms of lasting glory.
Of holier life in realms of lasting glory.

I know there is a Heaven, for is not she
Heaven itself embodied, pure and fair?
I know it well that she is Heaven to me,
Among the saints and angels most rare.

Winning Ways:

OR,

KITTY ATHERTON'S HEART.

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER XXIV.—CONTINUED.

If there had been any chance of a reconciliation between them (and who can say what-reviving thoughts of tenderness might not have been in Kitty's heart during that steady gaze?) it was lost now, and forever. She sprang from her seat, and dashed the book she was reading to the floor.

"Mr. Oliver," she cried, "how dare you say such things to me! You have yet to learn, I think, who you are speaking to."

She was going out of the room when he stopped her, pale with passion.

"Explain yourself."

"Let your own heart tell you what I mean."

"Do you doubt my honor?"

She was silent for a moment. Then she said, passionately:

"Doubt you! I do more—far more than that! I hate you! I have the most utter contempt for you—a contempt which no words can possibly express!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes! and I have longed to tell you so ever since you wrote to me from Paris."

"Where I had been kindly informed, Kitty, that you were making me and yourself the laughing stock of London."

"I don't care—I don't care what they said!" she cried, defiantly, for his mocking smile made her utterly beside herself with rage. "I wish it had all been true, every word of it. And, as sure as I live, Mr. Oliver, I will leave you this very day, and never see you, I hope, on earth again."

"You are complimentary, madam," was all he said, as she sprang toward the door, trembling with passion from head to foot.

He opened it with a low bow, closed it after her, and sat down and laughed. He had "had it out" with Kitty much sooner than he thought.

That vow of Kitty's was rashly made, it may be, but it was faithfully kept. That very afternoon, while Mr. Oliver was in London, renewing acquaintance with some of his old club friends, she dressed herself for a walk, went quietly out of the house and down the garden-walk. Her own maid and several of the other servants saw her go; but though she was as pale as death, and carried a light traveling-satchel in her hand, not one among them dreamed that they would never look upon her face again!

At the gate she paused for a moment, and turned back toward the house with yearning eyes, as if half-wavering in her purpose. The bitterness of death was in that look! How much—oh, how much she had said farewell to—forever—as she closed that gate behind her for the last time!

CHAPTER XXV.

"Our babe in its quiet sleep
Lay shrouded as soft as balm,
And the children came to peep
At its beauty, so dearly earned."

"Why—is it possible you do not know? There has been a divorce!"

"Who procured it?"

"I did. I got it before Captain Conyers died in India."

"Then, God forgive you, Francis Oliver! You have been the evil genius of that poor child's life; but this last cruelty crowns all. Let us say good-by, at once!"

"As you like."

But, even while he spoke the words, something swelled in his throat, and his eyes filled with tears.

"You ought not to be so harsh with me," he murmured. "However, good-by, since you will have it so, and may you be happy. Shake hands once more!"

She gave him her hand. He bent over it an instant, then touched his horse with his spur, and was off like the wind toward the Pyramids. Straight on in the wide desert he rode, and so vanished from her eyes. In the land of his adoption he lived and died, but Olive Elliot never saw him on earth again!

CHAPTER XXVII.

"There's a blue flower in my garden,
The bee loves more than all,
The bee and I, we love it both,
Though it is but frail and small."

"She loved it, too long, long ago—
Her love was less than mine;
Still we were friends—but only friends—
My love, love, Lorraine."

KITTY, going back into the farm-house in a state of utter bewilderment, met good Mrs. Westwood, with her hands full of magnificent hot-house flowers.

"Oh, there you are!" she exclaimed, as she caught sight of her young lodger. "I was so afraid you had gone out. And here are some splendid flowers, that Judge Hill brought for the sick lady from his own conservatory."

"Judge who?" said Kitty, as she took the brilliant bouquet and hid her face in it, lest the old lady should see the equally brilliant blush that rose suddenly to her cheeks.

"Judge Hill, of Hilltown—a great friend of my son John. Such a house as he has got, my dear! Such horses, such carriages! He is an Englishman, you know."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and when he came to America he was as poor as Job's turkey, they say. But everything has prospered with him since he settled out West. He is a naturalized American citizen, you see, and as smart a man as you will find anywhere. He has been a selectman, and member for Congress, and now he is a judge, and Hilltown is named after him. You must let my John drive you over there some day; for his place is really worth seeing."

"Mrs. Hill might not like that," suggested Kitty, in a low voice.

"The worst of him. He isn't married. That is the worst of him. He won't marry. We always have a quarrel about it when he comes here. As I tell him, an old bachelor is of no sort of use in this world; but he only laughs. So kind is he to women, too! The minute he heard we had a sick lady here he brought these flowers all the way himself—twelve good miles, if it is a step."

"He is indeed, very kind," said Kitty.

"Pray, say how much we are obliged to him, the next time he comes here."

"That I will!" And the good old woman bustled away to look after her household affairs.

Kitty mused a moment, then went straight to La Stella, gave her the flowers, and told her all. Whereupon La Stella, wayward as invalids usually are, bestirred herself to obtain more information about the young judge, and ascertaining, without a doubt, that he was about to pay a short visit to the city of New York, she immediately insisted on returning there—dragged Kitty in her train, and entered upon a round of fashionable dissipation, which had but one acknowledged end, that of bringing the long-parted friends together once again.

They met first at a party in a Fifth Avenue hotel, given in honor of the English consul.

Kitty, the brilliant, dark-eyed woman, with a certain Spanish ease and coquetry visible in her manner, was the acknowledged belle of the room. Young men and old men bowed alike at her shrine, and gazed enraptured on the perfect loveliness of her face. All save one—and he stood aloof, at a little distance, with his head bowed moodily, and his arms crossed upon his breast. With a kind of startled interest he mingled with the select few who were following her to the music-room. A friend came up and took his arm.

"It will be such a treat," he whispered. "The seldom sings, to-night was obliged to yield. I am so glad."

He did not answer. He was watching the superb air of indifference with which she received the attention of those who thronged around her.

"What shall I sing?" she asked, indifferently.

"Oh, let it be one of your beautiful Scotch ballads," said a lady who stood beside her.

She paused, played a simple prelude, and began to sing "Bonny Doon."

The listener started and turned pale. He had often heard that same song among the groves of New Forest, and though the deep contralto voice was wonderfully strengthened and purified, he felt that it must be the same. Dazzled and bewildered he passed his hand over his eyes, and tried to think.

How she had changed! How proud and queenly she looked—and how well her costly dress became her! He gazed at her with his soul in his eyes. As she sang the touching words—

"And my false lover put'd the rose,
But, oh, he left the thorn with me!"

with the sound of tears in her voice, she looked up, and there beside her stood the one whose memory seemed inseparably connected with the song, and of whom she was even then thinking! The shock was too great and sudden. She sprang up, laid both her hands in his, and then, for the first time in her life, she fainted!

All was confusion around her; but it was Judge Hill who bore her to a couch near the window.

"Give her air!" he said, loudly, and they obeyed, while one or two, who had remained to assist him, hurried away for remedies. The two so long parted were alone.

She opened her heavy eyes, and saw him bending over her, pale as death.

"You here? Do we meet again like this, William?" she exclaimed.

After the first sudden shock, however, she bore the meeting well, for she had been schooling herself for it long. Not so the judge. His voice faltered—his cheek paled as he touched her hand, and a deep flush rose to his very temples. With a graceful ease she covered his embarrassment, and dismissing the group of friends around her one by one, fanned herself

languidly while she chatted, first to him, and then to La Stella, who still remained. But William was too anxious and ill at ease to join the conversation, and at last she took pity on him.

"The heat of the room is still so great," she murmured, "if you will give me your arm, we will explore some of the cool marble halls and passages for which this house is so famous. Anything is better than these crowded saloons."

"Dear Kitty, forgive me," he said. "But when I saw you so unhappy, I could not go away or be silent. You know—you must know—that I love you with all my heart and soul. I would sooner die than see a shadow or a cloud upon your heart."

A look of bitter pain passed over it even as he was speaking; for she remembered that he had said the same thing to her, long before, in the garden by the New Forest.

"I am sorry to hear you say this," she answered, rather unsteadily.

"I have always felt that you were wronged," he went on, eagerly. "I have heard something about you—not much—but enough to make me love you more, and to long with all my heart for the happiness of calling you my wife."

"Ah," she said, shaking her head, "I have had many a thought of you, William, since I knew we were to meet. We have both grown old. So ends this little story of love for me. For the rest, I try to be useful and busy, and fill up my appointed time as best I may. It is a pleasant life, too, than I once thought it could be. It is not the life that might have been; but God knows what is best. I look back upon my early life in the New Forest, and that troubled ecstasy of love as a beautiful dream, which was given me at morning, that I might better support the toils and trials of life's noonday. But the noonday is going now, and the night is coming on. I look forward to nothing but rest. I have waited to tell you this, William—to thank you for all your goodness and kindness—to say 'farewell. God bless you!' I am glad you are a good and a noble man; because one day, if not now, I am sure you will be a very happy one."

One light pressure on his hand, and she glided away like a ghost.

He did not attempt to detain her. He left the house and sought his own rooms at the Hotel.

Throwing a few things into a valise, he stepped out into the street, and walked slowly toward the hotel, where the ball had been given.

He found himself there, after a hurried walk of some five minutes.

"It's the last time, Kitty, that I shall be so weak," he murmured, as he looked up at the brilliantly-lighted windows. "The last time I shall be so near you! Oh, Kitty, can you dream what you have done, or is your heart all marble?"

He buried his face in his hands and wept like a child. The memory of the happy hours he had spent with her, came over him too strongly to be borne. He could only meet such remembrance with his tears.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Break, break, break,
Over my cold gray stones, oh, sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me!"

"Oh, well for the fisherman's boy
That shouts with his sister at play!
And well for the sailor's son
That he sings in his boat on the bay!"

—TENNYSON.

In the guest-chamber at the Westwood Farm, Kitty Oliver lay dying! Consumption, that fatal scourge of the Northern climate, had already numbered La Stella among its victims, and was but waiting now, in a few hours, to claim another as its prey.

Kitty knew that it was all over—knew that the fair green earth had nothing more in store for her. Yet she was very calm—buying herself in penning little trembling farewells to her father, Miss Marchmont, and the husband whose face she was never to see again. When the letters were finished, she lay back upon her pillow with a placid smile.

"And this is death!" she said, musingly. "After this sad mistake of life comes the sweet and long repose! I do not fear it."

A sob from the watcher by her side checked her. She put out her hand gently.

"Poor William! First to love, and last to desert me! I knew that you would come when I sent for you. And I shall die happier for having you here. There is something sweet to me in the thought of passing my last hours with you. I began life by your side alone, let me also end it here."

He could not speak. He laid his head down upon her hand, and cried bitterly.

"Do you remember," she said, dreamily, "the old fairy tale we used to read together? How I should like to hear it once again."

"I can remember it, Kitty."

"Tell it to me, then."

With a trembling voice, broken by sobs, he began the dear familiar tale.

She checked him in the middle of it, saying: "Oh, I wish we had staid in the New Forest all our lives, dear, reading fairy tales! I have been so tired all these years; I am so tired now!"

She closed her eyes with a weary sigh, and seemed to doze. Then a strange change passed over her face, she opened her eyes, and looked with quivering fear at him.

"After all, I dread it! It is dark and cold! I feel so faint! I am afraid to die! I don't know how to die."

"But we have read in the Bible, my darling—"

"I know. God be merciful to me—a sinner."

They were her last words. She folded her hands upon her breast, looked up to Heaven, and died.

William bent above her in speechless agony a moment. Then, rising from his knees, he closed the sightless eyes, kissed the cold lips, covered the poor, pale face, and went away, weeping bitterly.

The fairy tale was never finished. But better words and a sweeter song were on her lips, we trust, in Heaven!

The tale is told, dear reader! If you ask me why I have painted the sad picture of their separated, aimless, and, in some sense, wasted lives, I cannot answer you. What one sees, that must one reproduce.

The silence of the grave hallows all things. And standing by that lonely mound upon the Western prairie, it may be that each one of us can forgive poor Kitty for her faults and follies—can judge her mercifully—and looking at the secret records of our own lives, feel pity and sorrow for this useless broken one of hers! So gently may we all be judged in turn, when we, too, sleep the sleep that knows no waking.

THE END.

Laurel's Last Escapade.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

RAP.

"Come."

A tiny maid opened the door and laid some letters upon the escritoire at which Laurel Larabee sat writing.

"Thank you," and she went on penning a letter. It was almost completed. She glanced it over, signed her name, and prepared it for the mail, with a sigh that seemed a trifling contradiction to her listless manner and passive features. Then her handsome face drooped upon her white hands, and her thoughts went wandering the way the mist was the day before.

She saw the brightening of Carl McDonald's eyes, as he should read this letter for whose consent he had waited, faithfully, so many years. She knew that could she see deeper than his eyes, and scan the most secret pages of his soul, she would find there but records of unswerving loyalty to her, and a love as pure and deep as a religion. She remembered how speedily, now, by her own decree, this man's devotion was to constitute one of the daily elements of her life. But, somehow, none of these thoughts sent the bright blood throbbing one whit the faster through Miss Larabee's veins. They soon, even, tired her. She raised her head with an impatient, petulant motion, and caught sight of her unfinished letter.

There was a business envelope, the superscription in a rapid, running hand, and under it a faintly odorous note in elegantly initialed paper. In an instant Laurel's listless eyes were full of wondrous lights, and she tore eagerly at the wrapper.

"Oh, glorious! How nice of La Grange to suggest it."

Miss Larabee sprang up, and consulted the little watch which hung in its velvet and crystal case upon the dressing-bureau. Then she turned to the escritoire.

"Margaret, say to my aunt, when she returns, that I have gone out, and may not be back before evening."

In a few minutes Laurel Larabee stood before a mirror, costumed in some heavy dark material, of action; the dress had a high collar, with its tropical plumage, adding to the charmfulness of her flushed, brilliant face.

She crossed to the escritoire, rapidly pushed the papers within, and turned the key upon the door.

"Oh! Carl's letter!—But to-morrow will do just as well," and she went out of the room a trifle moodily. With the remembrance of the letter had come the thought of what Carl would say of this escapade she contemplated.

Laurel's mind was not given to consulting wishes but her own; and she was desperately fond of the adventures in which she and La Grange Fauquier had recklessly indulged through a long, dangerously glorious summer. Moreover, she never intended to resign her freedom of action to any person, as she had declared repeatedly. Yet she was conscientious enough to acknowledge that she owed a lead allegiance to the man who had so loyally waited for her to signify her readiness to consummate their love.

"But I have not sent the letter yet," answered Laurel, to Conscience, "and this shall be the last time."

Five hours later, out on the open sea, a tiny yacht tossed high and low over the white crests of the waves, and in it were only a lady and a gentleman. La Grange Fauquier, thin, strong, and handsome, guided the tiller. His yachting suit, with the jaunty cap, from under which his black hair waved slightly, was picturesque, and becoming in the extreme to his bold, dark beauty.

Laurel, tending the main-sheet, with her pretty booted feet braced firmly against the center-boards, watched him with ardent, admiring eyes. It seemed to her he had never been so wise, so confident, so strong, so manly, so intensely resolved, so determined, so intensely manly. Not that Miss Larabee was in love with Fauquier. She had known from the first that their wild companionship was, of itself, quite a sufficient barrier to his loving her; and so she had taught herself to care for him, and believed she had succeeded.

Still, it seemed a little hard to give him up; to confess to him her long betrothal and its approaching termination; to feel that he would smile indulgently, and congratulate her, and say that he was sorry they had parted, but that he was so very busy now that she was, and then be as indifferent to her as if they had never climbed mountains hand in hand, and clung to each other as they descended rocky walls, and sung softly together as they floated down the lake back river in summery, moonlight glimmers, and ridden together in storm and darkness, and hunted together through low, sunny wildernesses; and that he would marry some timid, baby-sweet, doll girl who would go into nervous spasms at his mere recital of the past.

"Bah!" It made Laurel shudder to think how man of Fauquier's spirit and passion could choose such insipid women for their wives!

Her eyes had dropped to her dress, wet with blood, and to her white hand, streaked with blood, when a sudden gust of wind had torn at the sail. She had borne the pain bravely, only laughing at La Grange when he had tenderly begged her to bind up the wound. She had been so sure that anything in his sight, she would not shrink at anything that she had accepted his graceful challenge to help him sail his boat, for this last time, in the dangerous autumn weather. And, though he professed to admire her high spirit and courage, it vexed her to know that for all he was only one of many men who turn for love from the women who will dare any danger with them to the women who are helpless for themselves and others.

But she would not care! Why should she—said Carl McDonald's betrothed? And her scarlet lips convulsed definitely, through her eyes were still a troubled look as she raised them to her companion. At sight of his swarthy face, almost colorless, she was startled. He looked upward, with grave, dark glance.

"A squall! I fear some of it will reach us—not all, I hope! This is a treacherous day; we are going to have some rough sailing before we get back."

"And we're used to rough sailing, La Grange."

"Yes, but not at this season of the year," he answered, still anxiously watching the threatening sky. Then, suddenly bending toward her: "Shall you care enough to forgive me, little one, if I have been so rash as to have brought you into danger?"

"Haven't I proved myself a trustworthy comrade?" Laurel asked.

"Yes, always; only—how it blows! I must lower the jib! Laurel, can you hold the tiller and let my comrade's feet rest?"

She goes over the big waves, and keeps cool, and let your sheet run if the squall strikes her."

Miss Larabee bent every energy to the execution of her task—for the first time that she was blowing was wondrously momentary, and the yacht was pitching headlong from night to day, with a motion that would have blanched the cheek of any less fearless creature than this handsome, cool, daring girl. The veins on brow and hands showed blue and swollen, and there were the marks of her teeth upon her lips, when La Grange came back, all drenched with the blinding spray, to take his place at the tiller. With a sudden thrill of enthusiastic admiration, he pressed his lips to her beautiful wounded ones.

Laurel's pale, cold, wet face flushed hotly for a minute and the labored breathing of her heart seemed stilled by that caress; then she laughed, and sweetly sat herself in her place, and wound her hands in the rope she held.

"Steady, Laurel, steady!" La Grange cried, as the wind bore down upon them, sending the little boat madly over the rough side. "Keep her well in the wind, and we'll make a glorious

run! There isn't much danger now, it seems; only you're almost drowned with the breakers, and are likely to get a fine cold!"

"Not so very likely—I'm no baby," laughed Laurel.

And then the danger that La Grange thought over suddenly overtook them.

The ragged clouds that had seemed about to pass by them with no harm, rifted asunder; and one edge of the squall swept down upon the boat and its small crew. The waves rose in great ridges, fairly blinding the two sailors, and the tornado of wind struck the taut sail. The boat careened, and for one moment there was the frightful sound and sight of the rushing angry sea! La Grange was straining every nerve at the tiller, and Miss Larabee's hands were entangled in the rope as she went.

"Laurel! Laurel! Let the sheet run!"

Even as he spoke the girl had torn her hands free and given the sail to the wind! Slowly the boat righted; and, back from the very depths of death, the man and woman looked into each other's eyes. Laurel's heart, in that instant of supreme danger, had acknowledged its love; and La Grange Fauquier was wondering if, after all, this girl with her passion, and beauty, and brave soul, was not worth the winning.

But an open boat, uncomfortably filled with water, out on a stormy sea, under a cold autumn sky, was not the place for sentiment; and the best moments of two lives drifted into the past.

A few minutes of rough sailing and the storm had passed. There was a season of sunlight and calm, and though La Grange and Laurel were shivering with cold and excitement, they laughed over their misfortunes as they ate some lunch, and Fauquier coaxed Miss Larabee to swallow a little brandy.

"It is nearly four o'clock, now," said the gentleman. "If the wind breezes up again, we shall be back by six."

The wind did breeze up, but it had shifted; and at the end of another hour the yacht was still far from its destination—off a long line of desolate coast. Laurel's consciousness began to grow dim; and at her miserable plight, her increasing weakness, and at the rapidly deepening night, already her escapade had taken an almost unpardonable character; what would her friends say if she and Fauquier were out all night?

"Laurel," called La Grange, after a rough tack, "there is no use trying to carry all this sail! I must take in a reef. I'll have to trouble you to tend the tiller again, and keep well in shore."

It was already quite dusk, and Laurel did as she was told without realizing the danger that was befalling them, until she found that her utmost strength failed to control the rudder.

"What is the matter?" she cried, as La Grange's face grew so dark.

One moment of awful suspense and then the answer came:

"We're caught in the rollers! God help us!"

Sure enough, the boat was beyond guidance, now; the toy of those angry surges; and each dark, tumultuous surge seemed an eternity of time to its two inmates. They were both desperately cool, though, as they waited, hand in hand, for the embrace of the pitiless flood.

"It's coming!" Fauquier whispered, at last, raising his flask to his lips and drinking it. "But we are pretty near shore. Do not lose your courage, Laurel. I will save you—if mortal aid can't!"

The moment had come, and they struggled in the churning water. Then, in that awful darkness, Laurel remembered all he had told her, and forced herself to be calm—though a score of times it seemed as if his strength must fail them or the merciless breakers wash them apart; a score of times she felt her senses reel and a deathly unconsciousness beginning her; but she would not lose her self-control even while horrible possibilities painted pictures in her mind. If she died what would people say? and what would Carl think of that letter home he had written her? But if she lived—she should be glad it had never been sent; and she did live! There was a touch of sand for a moment. The undertow beat them back again! Then a great roller rose and they were wading up out of the foamy sea.

Beyond the highest ridge of sand lay a track of marshes, and far away shone one ruddy light. The two had rested, silently, before toiling to this look-out. La Grange pointed to the distant hut.

"Have you strength to get that far, Laurel?" he asked.

"Try me," she said, resolute to the last.

And so they made their way thither; but when the door of the warm, lighted room was opened to them, Laurel put out her hands, blindly, and went into a dead faint; and from that time to a high fever.

La Grange watched her all that night, and the next morning sent for her aunt. Mrs. Larabee came—anxious, yet angry, and frigidly dignified toward Fauquier; and that gentleman was glad to escape to his own home. For a few days he, too, was ill; then he went down to see Laurel again. She was delicious, and did not know him; and her pleading way of repeating his name only troubled him. Mrs. Larabee was so polite, and so was the gentleman, with the honest, sorrowful look that had lately introduced to Fauquier as her niece's betrothed; and La Grange did not venture to visit Laurel again for a long time.

The terrible struggle with wind and waves had made Fauquier's handsome face additionally interesting by leaving upon it a slight lingering pallor; and the women of his world quite raved over him and his bravery, while poor Laurel was getting a pitiless condemnation at the hands of Mrs. Grundy. When, with the latest autumn days, she was gradually convalescing, Carl's frequent visits annoyed her, woefully. She was growing soul-sick for a sight of the dark, bold face that had been so close to hers through those awful hours which had been woven into her life, and were to change all its bright web.

At last, she was back home and beginning to feel the scourge of conventionalism because of her escapade with La Grange Fauquier. But she did not mind that, if only he would come and say one loving word to her! It was cruel that he did not; after all the dear days and the terrible dangers, they had passed together! And she was only a shadow of her brilliant, former self—while day after day of suspense went by. But he came, after a time, and was horrified at the change in her beauty.

"You must hurry and get back your bright eyes and charming color, little girl; I want you to get yourself in readiness for my marriage."

He spoke so tenderly that Laurel's heart was agitated between hope and dread as she forced herself to question.

"Your marriage? When? To whom?"

"At New Year; to Miss Lyndel. You do not know her, I think, though you may have seen her. She is not a bit your style; but she is as true, and gentle, and devoted a little woman as a man need wish for a wife. And suppose," he went on, without seeing the look in Laurel's burning eyes, "I may take your congratulations for granted, and tender you mine. Mr. McDonald seems a very fine man, and there is no doubt about his being a favored one!"

"Thank you," Laurel said, calmly, though she was struggling hard to retain self-control and consciousness.

Then Fauquier rose to go and took her hand. "Poor little hand," he said, smiling down into her strangely intense unwavering eyes. "How it suffered that day! And what a brave little woman you were! I shall not soon forgive myself for getting you into such a scrape. But it will blow over; and you must hurry and get well and not reproach me with your white face!"

He well might call it white, now, as, to the latest moment, he tortured her; and when he was gone and Carl McDonald sought the room, and found it lying deathly cold upon the bright pattern of the carpet, it seemed as if its whiteness was forever.

"Why didn't you let me die?" Laurel mumbled, when she came back to life, and found him bending tenderly over her.

"Because I cannot spare you, darling!"

Laurel turned away her head, impatiently. But that evening when Carl begged her to set a time for their wedding, she bade him name it himself. And so, before the New Year, they were married.

That was hardly a year ago; and, already, Carl McDonald knows that but for a brief time longer may he cherish his wife with loving care; for the brilliancy that faded from Laurel's face and life with her last escapade will never again return.

TO ADVERTISERS.

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WANTED MEN

THE UNMARRIED MAIDEN.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

She was a maiden very gay,
Her costume varied,
Her given name was Anna May—
Her life was animal-ted.

And from her eyes, so very arch,
Shot glances like an archer,
They had the power to make you start,
Although she was no starker.

Her father he was very poor,
And left her but a portion,
Her golden days were nearly o'er
Yet she would not the ore shun.

Her eyes would flash with awful ire
When she was asked to iron;
And while her father wore a fire
His daughter was a siren.

While every one thought her a fay
Her angered frown was fatal,
To frown on lovers was her way
And so she made them wait all.

Lovers to do the most did vie,
The tears would fill a vial,
And every one would swear to die
For her sake by the dial.

Each wished to call the maid his own
And longed to be hers only,
And thought, in spite of woman,
Without her, life'd be lonely.

Although she looked quite well in lace,
You would not call her lazy,
And she, in those old-fashioned days,
Did blossom like the daisy.

In having splendid clothes to wear
She never once got weary,
Light-footed as the fallow-deer,
She surely was a daisy.

Her figure was a little spare,
Say, like an English sparrow,
But still she could not float on air
As would a bow-sent arrow.

Her form just like the letter S
Of grace it had the essence,
And she loved fashion none the less
Since she loved music-lessons.

Of many subjects she had read,
On answers to her questions,
And turned the heads of Tom and Ed
As if within an eddy.

When asked her hand she would say "La,"
With vehemence unlawful,
And then her sister would say "Ah,"
And carry on quite awful.

To every one she would give No;
To wed she had no notion;
And she advised them all to go
And travel unto Goshen.

And those who at her dear feet laid
Their hearts, so long and weary,
Found all their lives much darker made
By this unloving maiden.

To wed she thought 'twas best to wait,
But thus her life grew weighty,
And so alone she lived and ate and near,
And died when she was eighty.

Cavalry Custer,

From West Point to the Big Horn;

OR,

THE LIFE OF A DASHING DRAGON.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ,

AUTHOR OF "LANCIE AND LASSO," "THE SWORD-HUNTERS," ETC.

VII.

The lodge-pole trail soon became so plain that scouts could follow it at a trot, and whenever a piece of soft ground came along, they could see the marks half a mile ahead. The scouts pronounced the trail about twelve hours old, and it was clear that the Indians were not far away. So the column swept on its way as fast as the wagons could be driven, the scouts ranging on so far ahead as to be almost out of sight at times, the column of cavalry only about half a mile in front of the wagons.

There they were on the broad green plains, the grass now sprung well up, and hiding the crevices and dog-holes that make riding so dangerous. The country stretched away in waves like a great sea on all sides, and as the sun came out hot, the monotony of the scene was broken by the red began to make the officers sleepy. Every now and then, in the distance, one might see a few antelopes standing on the swells, watching the soldiers with curiosity; and some distant moving specks, when examined through a telescope, turned out to be a herd of mustangs scouring away.

Custer very soon became tired of riding at the head of his column, when all the scouts were away. He knew that the Indians were out of reach at present, and he was always devotedly fond of hunting. He could not resist the temptation of going off after some antelopes. There was a little group, right ahead of the column, some two miles off, and he made up his mind to have one if he could.

"Come, Blucher! Come, Maida!" he cried, and away he went over the plain with his two gallant grayhounds. The antelopes stood watching him in astonishment as he came, till he had topped and turned a swell, and lost sight of the column and his game at the same time. Then he pulled up, and rode more leisurely, skirting the foot of the next swell to leeward of the antelopes, in hopes of surprising them. Sure enough, when he rode over the next ridge, there were the pretty creatures not three hundred yards off still staring at the distant wagons, which they could see through a dip in the swell.

The next moment the antelopes saw Custer, and then—you have seen race-horses run, but you never saw anything run like those pronghorns. Away went Custer at the top speed of his thoroughbred horse, and away went the grayhounds, stretching out straight in their frantic eagerness. They might as well have chased a bird. The antelopes left them behind as if Custer had ridden on a cart-horse and the dogs had been fat lapdogs. Before one could say "Jack Robinson," the pronghorns were out of gunshot, and then they began to stop and look back as if inviting the hunter to come on.

In those days Custer was very green at hunting antelopes, or he never would have tried to run them down. For a mile or two they are the swiftest animals on the continent, though they can't last if hunted by relays of horses. However, he had all this to learn yet, so he kept on, sometimes getting near the game, but always distancing whenever they got frightened, till at last he gave it up as a bad job and called back his dogs.

There was not much run left in the grayhounds. They were quite exhausted already, for they had been fed so high in camp that they were too fat to run well. So back went master, horse and dogs, all feeling pretty well disappointed. There was no luck for them that day.

The chase had carried Custer quite out of sight of the wagons, and he hardly knew where he was. So he began to peer all round the horizon for landmarks. Nothing all round but the green plains, dotted with patches of bushes, one hillock just like another.

See, what's that? Custer started in his saddle, and shaded his eyes with his hand. Not a half-mile from him was a great black beast, quietly feeding in a green bottom, and it needed no one to tell Custer, any more than it would you, had you seen it, what it was. He had never seen one in his life before except in a picture, but there stood a real live buffalo waiting for him.

Who cares for antelopes now? A moment later, Custer had turned his horse, and was going straight for the buffalo. The beast was feeding, with its head turned away, and the general

*These "dog-holes," as the plainsmen call them, are the burrows of the prairie-dog, or American marmot, an animal that lives in regular villages of holes, so close together as to be dangerous to ride over.

was able to ride softly up to within a few hundred yards, when the buffalo suddenly tossed up its head, wheeled round to look, and then started off at a lumbering gallop.

"Hurrah, now we're off," thought Custer; and away went his splendid horse, full speed, the dogs running ahead. The buffalo looked heavy and awkward, but somehow it puzzled even Custer's splendid horse to catch up with it, tired as the horse was with the run after the antelopes. However, the dogs had recovered their breath by this time, and they had nothing to carry, so they skimmed away over the plain, and were soon up with the buffalo.

Look at that! Brave Blucher! The gallant dog made a grand leap and caught the buffalo by the ear. No use, Blucher. He's too much for you. See, the great black beast stops a moment, shakes its huge head, and sends poor Blucher flying, taking a mouthful of hair with him, for he wouldn't let go. Custer is coming up now. If he had a common horse, it would have given up long ago, but a thoroughbred will run till it drops dead.

Away goes the buffalo again, Maida after it on the other side. Good Maida! See, she tries the same leap as old Blucher, but misses it. The buffalo gives a low, angry bellow and makes a dash of its great head at the brave dog. No use, old fellow, Maida is too quick. There comes Blucher again, plucky as ever, and heads off the buffalo, barking loudly. The great brute comes to a trot, and now Custer is up within twenty feet of old fellow.

"Back, dogs, back!" he shouts, and out comes his big revolver. Now the buffalo starts off again and Custer after him. See, the hunter points his pistol at the beast, right in the midst of the black mane, and he suddenly turns to fetch the heart! The pistol quivers and settles to a good aim, and not ten feet separated man and game, both at full speed, when—*whut!*—round comes the old bull with a furious bellow at the horse, and the charger stops to shoot, finds himself almost off. *Crack!* a flash, a report, and the next moment down goes the horse, shot dead, while Custer goes flying one way, the pistol to the other, right in front of the buffalo, on the ground!

Another moment and the beast will be on him, when Maida and Blucher fall at the buffalo on the other side, and the great animal turns away with a snort of rage and gallops off, leaving Custer alone.

Here's a nice ending for a buffalo hunt, truly. The hunter rises from the ground, shaken and bruised, and looks ruefully at his dead horse. A thousand dollars gone, shot by accident, and not even a buffalo to show for it. Custer's finger had been on the trigger when the buffalo charged, and as he clutched at his rein to keep his balance, he had killed his own horse.

So ended Custer's first buffalo hunt; and so, or nearly so badly, ends the first buffalo hunt of every man who goes after buffalo. Custer's hunt was a failure, and he was much in love with the matter with their master. Here was a pretty situation to be in. Out on the plains without a horse, no rifle, for he had left that behind, no the next well, then he saw the dust of his rein men, the cavalry guidon fluttering high above it; and within half an hour he had another horse, and was riding along at the head of his column, as if nothing had happened. A party went off and took the evening from the dead horse, while the column pursued its way.

So he started off on foot, following like a sensible man, the back trail of his horse. He knew where he had come from, and he judged that he might find the column or its trail, if he went on long enough. He was saved the trouble of a long tramp, however. No need to go far. The next well, then he saw the dust of his rein men, the cavalry guidon fluttering high above it; and within half an hour he had another horse, and was riding along at the head of his column, as if nothing had happened. A party went off and took the evening from the dead horse, while the column pursued its way.

That day, the scouts went on very rapidly, the trail of the Cheyennes getting plainer and plainer. Fresh trails of parties of horsemen began to join it from each side, showing that the scouts were right in their supposition. The scattered Indians were beginning to reunite, thinking themselves out of danger. Several small lodge-pole trails joined the first, till the main trail was as plain as a road, and as easy to follow.

Moreover, the earth had not fallen down and packed, as it would have if the dew had fallen on it. This showed that part of the trail must have been made since daylight; how long? was the question. The head trail said just after sunrise, and his rear end gave you some idea of what trailing is in its nature.

"See dirt all stuck up big lumps, general," he said in his broken English. "Maybe so, must be wet, much heap. Dirt little bit stick now—see."

He pointed to the lodge-pole marks. The dirt at the edge of the furrows was in good-sized lumps, and seemed to be stuck together. Then he scraped another furrow close beside it, and showed how the dry dust fell away in small particles on each side. It was plain that the dirt must have been wet, when the lodge-poles scraped along, and, as there had been no rain, it must have been before the dew dried, that is, just after sunrise. It was now eight hours since sunrise, so that the column had probably gained four hours on the Cheyennes who had started twelve hours ahead of the soldiers.

This was very encouraging. The wagons were pushed to a trot, and the regiment was divided into five or six little short columns, each moving abreast of the others, at the top speed of the dreydards off. By this means the soldiers commanded a view of a large expanse of country, and the horses in the rear of the column were not tired by trotting to catch up.

The trail grew fresher when they were on ground was soft, but sometimes they came to long hard stretches of barren ground, only covered with the short buffalo grass, and as hard as a rock underneath. All the same, the Delawares and Shawnees pushed on, pointing out the trail by a few bent blades of grass, quite confident they were right.

Presently, away from the column, as they turned the edge of a swell, what should they all see but a herd of forty or fifty buffaloes, right in front of their path! It was plain that they were. Every one realized that the Indians must still be out of reach, or the buffalo would not be grazing quietly. The general was determined to kill a buffalo and wipe out the disgrace of the morning.

A short consultation was held, and away went Custer, with four or five officers who could be spared, after those buffalo. About two miles away was a little river with very steep banks, which the scouts said would delay the wagons at least half a day, so there was time for a hunt. Moreover, the river might stop the herd.

So away went Custer on a fresh horse, outstripping all his officers, and they were within a few hundred yards of the herd before the animals took the alarm. Then what a scampering! The horses seemed to go sideways with eagerness, leaping half out of the skins as they were, and coming up rapidly with the buffalo.

Now they're up, Custer first. No mistake this time. He's into the herd, which is scattering, and singles out a large fat cow. Now he's within range. *Crack!* No horse must kill that time. You might hear the slap of the bullet into the buffalo's side. She shakes her head and turns viciously on Custer, but he has not forgotten the lesson of the old bull. As the horse shies, he shies with it, and the buffalo, finding herself unable to catch the horse, turns and trots off. Round spins Custer, and again comes the crack of his pistol.

That did the business. The cow staggers and drops on her knees, and a moment later down she goes, dead.

Custer has killed his first buffalo; and as he pulls up, he hears the cracking of pistols that tells of his friends being hard at work beside him.

How they fared, we shall hear next week.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 393.)

The Havoc She Wrought.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

He was one of those men who commanded your admiration, your respect, your liking, and the first time Florence Hamilton met him she only did what every one did—what more than half the girls did who were introduced to Dr. Sidney.

I think the primary cause of Dr. Sidney's success among people was his beauty. There may be no end of learned disquisitions to prove that beauty can only appeal to ephemeral tastes, and that it is only admirable qualities that should command the admiration instead of physical charms; but certain it is that a fine physical presence will attract and command on the spot, instantly, when a lack of it, backed by the most wonderful counterbalancing mental and moral charms, will cause their possessor to be ignominiously looked over.

Dr. Sidney was undeniably handsome, with a beauty that, while women adored it, men were bound, as well, to admire. He was manly and chivalrous as a prince; he was gentle and caressing in his manner and tone, to women, and yet no one had ever dreamed of calling him impressionable or susceptible. He was frank, fearless, and decided in his way with men, and still he never had been called self-important or conceited, or anyway offensive.

He was generally conceded to be a gentleman of unusual skill and far-sightedness in his profession; he was positively known to enjoy a widespread reputation, and a large, successful practice. He was the center and soul of the social circles in which he moved when his business admitted of such relaxation, which was not nearly as often as people wished. He was unmarried, well-to-do, kept up a charmingly hospitable establishment, over which his sister presided, and thirty-eight years old, about.

Do you wonder, then, that Florence Hamilton should love with him almost as soon as she met him?

I have said that Dr. Sidney was neither impressionable nor susceptible, and by that I mean not that he did not ardently admire women—pretty, agreeable, fascinating women—but that he was highly self-controlled, and not easily as often as people wished. He was unmarried, well-to-do, kept up a charmingly hospitable establishment, over which his sister presided, and thirty-eight years old, about.

Do you wonder, then, that Florence Hamilton should love with him almost as soon as she met him?

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you are having a splendid time, and are the reigning favorite on all sides. I want you to have a good time, dear, and let every one know what a precious treasure I possess; only, darling, don't flirt with any one enough to hurt them, for I know you are as true as steel, loyal and true as you know I am.

"It is just possible that I may come to escort you home, Florence. If the courts are not in session I will. Think of it! Such a lazy, delicious ride all by our two selves! It will be so good and kind to you, darling, that the three hundred miles shall not be tedious."

It would have been impossible for any woman to read Rolf St. Lawrence's letter and not realize, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he loved Florence with all the fervor of his manhood, with all the tenderness of a grand, noble nature, and that, true and good himself, he pinned his faith, implicitly, upon her.

And Florence realized it with a sensation she could not describe, that was not proud delight that it was so, nor yet sorrow that she had been playing him false.

"He is a dear, good boy, and I suppose, of course, I love him. But—"

But as she looked up, through the window, and caught a glance from Dr. Sidney's eyes as he leaned forward and bowed in passing in his carriage, she wondered again if she had not been unwise, ay, worse than unwise—cruel, in that she had now two such men to love her?

For days afterward, Florence was grave and quiet, and her own face showed that she was the answer to Rolf St. Lawrence's letter, and Dr. Sidney's quick eyes discerned that, though she persisted in declaring herself the victim to a slow, tedious headache, that there was something deeper than headache the matter, something beyond the power of medical aid.

It was then, that Dr. Sidney made up his mind to tell her how he loved her—how he had come to regard all other good gods had given him as nothing if she, too, might not be given to him; and only the sight of her sad eyes, her pale face, her dispirited ways, prevented him pouring all his confessions upon her. But he was generous and patient; so he decided it would be better not to take advantage of her transient mental or physical indisposition.

The days went on, and still Florence could not end the agonizing conflict that was being fought between hourly strengthening passion for Dr. Sidney, and hourly increasing, almost clamorous demands of conscience to be leal and true to her absent, unconscious, trusting lover. She could not bring herself to answer Rolf St. Lawrence's letter as it deserved, as she knew he confidently expected, and as was her wont to do; so she penciled a postal card, begging his forbearance and telling him she was not well, and would write him just as soon as it was possible.

It was just a mere bit of rest to her mind when she had done that, and the sparkle began to come to her eyes, and Dr. Sidney saw the returning color on her cheeks—poor, silly child—for such a short respite.

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some, and only occasional memories of Florence's sweet face haunt him.

Rolf St. Lawrence has never married. He could not stand the discipline of disappointment as Dr. Sidney, with his finer nature, did. He is a morose man, who hates womankind and avoids them. He has grown shiftless and cynical, and will be, eventually, a wreck of a man. While Florence Hamilton, who could not resist the opportunity to flirt a little, is old, faded, and living out her days with the bitter knowledge of the havoc she wrought for time, and perhaps for eternity.

Girls, heed the lesson. It may be sport while it lasts, but no mortal eye or human hand can measure the infinity of result of a flirtation.

Old Arkansaw's Ruse.

BY OLL COOMES.

"Boys," said young Templeton, in a serious tone, "we are doomed. We had better take the chances in fighting our way out of here than remain here and starve to death. Those savages are determined to have our scalps."

The speaker was a young man scarcely twenty years of age. He was dressed in the garb peculiar to the frontier, and well armed, as were his companions also. A look of utter despondency overshadowed the features of the youth for an inevitable death stared them in the face.

The little party, numbering ten men, had been surrounded by a large body of Indians three days previous, and taking refuge in a dry basin in the valley of the Arkansas, had kept up a desperate resistance through the boiling heat of three August days. In this time their supplies had been exhausted, and nothing but death by starvation or the Indian tomahawk seemed to await them.

"No, boys," said Old Arkansaw, the hunter who had been acting as guide to the party; "never give up till the last dog's dead. There's a few frogs in this pond yet. Hold 'em up till they last we'll not starve. I like frogs, I do, for a fact. To-night I'm goin' out after supplies. I'll bet you I git through that Indian lie, or bleed."

"You'll bleed, Arkansaw," said Templeton, in whose breast all hopes had died.

"Wait and see," said the old borderman. And away they did. Night set in rather dark, and Old Arkansaw took leave of his friends and struck out upon his hazardous journey.

The Indian scouts, not some before, were posted upon all sides. East of their position rolled the Arkansas river. West of them a long, steep hill rose gradually up almost to the sky. Its summit was crowned with a heavy growth of timber, but the side sloping toward the besieged was smooth and unbroken. Halfway up this hill the Indians had posted a warrior to keep a watch upon the whites and